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THE SOUL OF FRANCE



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R. Lailleus

92005

THE SOUL OF FRANCE

BY
REUBEN SAILLENS, D.D.

"GESTA DEI PER FRANCOS"

GUIBERT DE NOGENT
History of the Crusaders (XIth Century)

MORGAN & SCOTT L^{TD}.
12, PATERNOSTER BUILDINGS
LONDON, E.C. MCMXVI

P R E F A C E



THE aim of this book is to afford the English reader a cursory view of the spiritual history of France. Few historians concern themselves mainly with the Soul of nations ; wars and dynasties are foremost in their works. The names of two or three great military men, and of one or two genial writers or artists : that is all that the man in the street knows of any people beside his own. That is particularly the case, we believe, with regard to the mutual acquaintance of those two near neighbours, the English and the French. And this explains how it is that, since the beginning of this War, France has been the wonder of the world, by the quality of her moral fibre, and her unexpected power of endurance in trials more severe than she has known for centuries.

These pages will show that France has ever been a chivalrous defender of ideals, ever athirst for something higher and better. Her very

restlessness, with which she is often reproached, is her glory. And the reason of this nobility of mind, as will appear in these pages, is that, being the earliest evangelized race in existence, France carries in her very Soul, from her birth as a nation, those immortal principles which are expressed in her motto: *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*, words drawn from the Gospel itself. How different from the blasphemous maxim of German theorists: MIGHT IS RIGHT!

The author has tried to show that this early deposit of Christian truth has never ceased to be present and active in the mental and moral constitution of France, giving rise to many so-called "Heresies," none more beneficial than that of the Huguenots, which prepared the great Revolution, and, to a large extent, made France what it is to-day—the bulwark of the world's liberties.

The book concludes with a few instances of the greatness of soul manifested during the War, and with a fervent hope and prayer that, by a return to the pure evangelic springs, to CHRIST Himself, apart from man-made Churches, France may still more become a benefactress of the world, in time of Peace, as she is now in War.

R. SAILLENS.

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THE SOUL OF FRANCE



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

NATIONS HAVE A SOUL. This means, simply, that a great current of spirit, thought and ideals, an undefinable oneness of mind, underlie the many and often conflicting elements which enter into the spiritual making of a nation. Life, under its real unity, is ever complex. Every living thing is made up of a host of separate beings, each having its own motions and obeying its own laws, yet all forming together a wonderful harmony. The same principle holds good with regard to those collective bodies which we call a family, a city, an empire, a church ; yea, with regard to mankind as a whole. All these collectivities have both a singular and a plural life ; they have a real existence of their own, submitted to the laws of birth, growth and decay, which rule every being, and each includes millions of separate existences, without absorbing them. Every one of those

collectivities has a consciousness, a temperament, a responsibility ; each has passions, greatnesses, infirmities . . . each has a soul.

How the many may be contained in the one, and yet retain their individuality, is one of the great mysteries of this mysterious world of ours. But, though no psychological research shall ever be able to give a full explanation of it, that fact is one of the most evident. It is plainly recognized in the Scriptures, which, in this as in every case, prove themselves to be in full accord with the laws of nature.

Indeed, to a casual reader, the Old Testament seems hardly to recognize any form of human life but the collective. Throughout its pages, the solidarity of the race seems to far outweigh the responsibility of the individual. The interests and destinies of the family, of the tribe, of the nation, are supreme ; the units which compose them are of secondary importance. The Old Testament is essentially the history of a nation to which promises of collective blessing have been made, and threats of collective punishment in case of failure to keep the law of God are constantly repeated. However, it is very remarkable that, in the Old Testament, the individual is far from being altogether overlooked. It is on the faith or failure of *individuals* that the destinies of *the race* depend : the woe of mankind as a corporate whole is shown to be the result of the fall of one man, Adam ; the blessing which rests

on Abraham's posterity is shown to be the result of the patriarch's faith. Thus, in the Old Testament, these two sides of human life, the individual and the collective, are never separated. And more and more, as the Book draws to its close, the responsibilities, the rights and the duties of the individual are strongly asserted; the prophets herald the coming of a day when man shall be free from the trammels of the race. But even then, they acknowledge that their nation has a collective account to render to God, and they foretell national disaster as the consequence of national sin.

The New Testament puts the emphasis on the Individual. The real soul of man is the individual soul, on whom alone rests the awful responsibility of accepting or rejecting eternal life. That alone is immortal. But, just as it would be untrue to say that the Individual has no place in the Old Testament, so it would be quite inaccurate to affirm that the New Testament does away entirely with national and racial solidarity.

On this point, the attitude and teaching of our Lord are most illuminating. He came to "His own"—His possessions, His family, His race—and His own received Him not. He was sent, according to His own words, "to the lost sheep of the House of Israel." Thus He made a sharp distinction between the Jewish people and the other races of the world, distinctly

acknowledging that, as a people, the Jews had a mission which belonged to no other nation: "Salvation is of the Jews." True, He often proclaimed the universalist character of the new and spiritual kingdom He was inaugurating, yet it was from His own people alone that He chose the twelve apostles who were to be the propagators of that Kingdom. He addressed Himself to His temporal nation, thus recognizing and emphasizing its national soul: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and *ye would not!*" Here, the reader will notice how the individual and the collective are, as it were, blended together, Jesus speaking first in the singular, as if all Jerusalem, throughout all the ages, had been one will, one conscience, one soul—and then, ending in the plural, thus showing the existence of separate wills, souls and consciences, each accountable for itself.

The reader will remember how the Lord addressed Himself in the same manner to smaller cities, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Chorazin, comparing them with Tyre, Sidon, Sodom, and threatening them with collective destruction.¹ And yet, a few lines further, He appeals—how lovingly!—to the individuals: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden! . . ."

¹ Matt. xi. 20-24.

Thus showing that while the citizens of Capernaum, as such, must share in the doom of their city, yet each of them separately may be saved, by coming to Him.

It is very remarkable that the New Testament records no case of the conversion to God of a whole nation, or even of a city, town or village. As to the national revivals which are recorded in the Old Testament, these were superficial, and ended in failure. The whole teaching of the Bible tends to emphasize the paramount value of the individual soul; while it takes due account of the tremendous importance of heredity, education and environment, it shows that, in spite of all these, the Individual, by God's grace, can be saved. Indeed, it shows that there is no eternal salvation, as there is no eternal existence, apart from the individual.

We have dwelt at some length on these considerations because, as it seems to us, the success of missionary and evangelistic effort depends, in a large measure, on a proper understanding of God's intentions and attitude with regard to man.

There is a certain conception of man which makes the nation (or State) to be everything, and the individual nothing. According to that doctrine, no individual conscience has any right to stand against the collective; no religious faith should be tolerated which is not the national faith. It was the doctrine of Judaism, in common

with all the religions of the past. It is the essence of Roman and Eastern Catholicism, and it vitiates to a large extent any amount of truth which these Churches possess. In fact, any Church that adopts the principle of national—as against individual—religion, in so far annuls the virtue of her spiritual teaching, however orthodox it may be. For while she thinks she is serving God, in reality she practically suppresses God's chief handiwork: *man*. It was that doctrine which caused torrents of innocent blood to be shed throughout the Middle Ages; and even the Reformers did not get rid of it altogether. It is far from being dead yet, and we may live to see the revival of a nationalist conception of religion, which will bring back religious persecution again. Meanwhile, there is much in the teaching and the tendencies of Socialism which works in the same spirit, towards the same end, viz. the suppression of the Individual on the altar of the Collectivity. It is that spirit which has prevailed in Germany, and has made her what she is to-day: a menace to the liberties of the whole world.

At the other extreme, there are those who do not take a sufficient account of the national soul. They have come to God by a certain way, and insist on every one, even of a different nationality from themselves, coming exactly by the same process. How often have the best intentions been frustrated, in France and elsewhere, and

much expense of time and money made useless, by a want of adaptation, on the part of the workers, to the idiosyncrasies of the peoples among which their lot was cast!

It might be objected that the Gospel needs no adaptation, God having intended it to be His revelation to all men, irrespective of race. And this is absolutely, beautifully true. The unique faculty of the Gospel to adapt itself to all men is perhaps the greatest proof—at all events it is one of the strongest—of its Divine origin. But it is not the message, it is the messenger, that needs adaptation. A careful study of the Acts and the Epistles will show how the early preachers of the Gospel, and especially that most wonderful of missionaries, Paul, took pains to understand the soul of the nations to which they were sent. Read, for instance, Paul's discourse to the Athenians.¹ How different is that speech from those delivered by the same speaker in the synagogues to his fellow-countrymen, though in both cases it was the same truth that was preached, with the same purpose in view! Or again, read the Prologue of St. John's Gospel: What a marvellous adaptation to the Greek modes of thought and expression—and this, from one who had been a plain fisherman on the Lake of Galilee! Surely this is one of the greatest miracles of history—that Jewish preachers and writers should thus have been enabled to penetrate and to under-

¹ Acts xvii.

stand the minds of the various races to which they addressed themselves. This could not have been a natural gift, for we know how narrow-minded, how provincial and prejudiced against all foreigners the apostles were, in common with the rest of the Jews, before their conversion, yea, and even for a long time after. Nothing, therefore, can account for that gift, except Divine inspiration, which endowed them with that supernatural Love which is the highest form of wisdom.

A man endowed with the Spirit of God will not underestimate the value of the national soul. He will try to hear in its traditions, in its folklore, literature and religious superstitions, whatever there may have been left of the first revelations of God to Man, whatever there may be of yearnings towards God, through the action of that mysterious Breath which, to-day as ever before, "moves upon the face of the waters." He will spend time, thought, prayer and study in trying sympathetically to understand the people among whom he is working.

There is a certain aloofness which, under the pretence of spiritual-mindedness, is nothing but a subtle form of pride. Salvation comes only through Incarnation. The Son of God became the Son of Man, a Jew of the tribe of Judah and of the family of David. He had to come down from Eternity into Time, from heaven to earth, in order to save us. And although as members of Christ's mystical Body we belong to another

world, and are seated with Him, by faith, in the heavenly places, yet it has pleased God that we should remain members of Adam's race, citizens of our respective nations, and that, as He did Himself when He was on earth, we should sympathize with the multitudes, see them with our hearts and minds as well as with our eyes, so as to share His compassion for them.

The Gospel was at first preached by foreigners, and it must continue to be so wherever it comes as a new doctrine. But those foreigners would never have succeeded, had they attempted to set the souls of their hearers against the soul of their nation. The Gospel does not contradict true nature, but rises above it. It illuminates the soul of a people; it gives sense and value to its aspirations; it ennobles its ideals; it tends to destroy its vulgarities. A French Christian, or a British, or a Russian, or of whatever nationality, will understand his people better, and will have a far more intelligent patriotism, than he had before he was a Christian. No nation can afford to do without the purifying and elevating element constituted by its Christian citizens, provided that their Christianity is genuine, and is neither imposed on them nor imposed by them.

One of our most precious remembrances is the occasion which was granted us, more than forty years ago, to hear the great missionary, Robert Moffat, who was then over eighty years of age. He was speaking somewhere in the East of

London of his work among his beloved Bechu-
anas. How he grew eloquent on the qualities
and virtues of the people among whom he had
spent the larger part of his life ! As he described
them, one could not help admiring them—and
admiring him most of all. Here was the true
missionary, the man who had taken the trouble to
search, under a heap of superstitions and pagan
horrors, for whatever remnant there might be of
God's image on the souls of his black friends ;
and he had succeeded. "They are truly my
people," said he in conclusion ; "here in England
I am in exile, and I wish I could return and
breathe my last among them." The same love
for the soul of Africa was a trait of the great son-
in-law of Moffat, Livingstone ; and it was most
noticeable in another great missionary, our own
François Coillard, the apostle of the Barotse.

One of the relieving facts of the present terrible
situation, is that France and England are closely
allied. Together they stand for better and for
worse, welded so closely together by the fires of
peril and sacred enthusiasm, that we may hope it
is for ever. Through this War, indeed, a new
patriotism has arisen—a patriotism of ideals
rather than of territories. We are fighting for the
same interests, which are those of humanity, in
common with noble little Belgium and mystical
Russia. Such an union would have been im-
possible but for the fact that our nations have
kindred souls. Far down the ages a Light has

come to our forefathers which has never been quenched, though at times it shone but dimly. Our nations are one by their Christian civilization, and it is most important that they should be made aware of the fact. Oh that they would together go back to their origin, and seal their alliance by giving up, on both sides, all that has marred true Christianity in their midst!

Long before the War broke out, long before the diplomats of our two countries had invented and rendered of popular use the two words "Entente Cordiale," the Evangelical Christians on both sides of the Channel had practised the Entente. But our hope is, that when this War is over the Christians of the two nations will come together in a more systematic way; that, notwithstanding the barrier of language, they will associate even more closely than before, each borrowing from the other according to the gifts imparted to each. What a powerful combination this would be, under the uniting influence of the Holy Spirit—English stolidity, liberality and practicalness, joined to French imagination, enthusiasm and clear logic—all bound together for the same end, to free the world from all bondage, superstition and infidelity, not by the sword, but by the preaching of the Grace of God! But in order to bring about this glorious state of things, we must take pains to know each other's soul.

An English author who seems to have done so,

writes thus: "Just as the niceties and intricacies of French speech are only mastered by long-continued unfettered intercourse, so the subtle composition of French character and social life demand the most intimate acquaintance to be properly understood. Of first importance is the knowledge of the people. . . . Thoroughly to understand a nation we must mix with those who chiefly constitute it. . . . The small official, the peasant proprietor, the artisan, of these is the nation made, by these its future history is shaped."¹ And we may add, that to understand a nation, there must be an intelligent acquaintance with its past history, especially with the moral and religious aspect of it.

France is the oldest civilized country of Europe. She has known many changes, she has passed through many fires. Prudent and reserved, though good-natured, she does not open to every casual passer-by her innermost soul. She must be won by intelligent love, respectful and patient; and she well deserves it.

When M. Guizot, the great statesman who, in the early years of Queen Victoria, was sent by the Government of King Louis-Philippe as ambassador to England, and who became afterwards, till the close of Louis-Philippe's reign, the Prime Minister of France—a Protestant by birth and a staunch Evangelical by personal conviction—when M. Guizot was on the point of death, his

¹ M. Betham-Edwards, *France of To-day*.

last words to his family gathered around his bed were these : “ Mes enfants, la France est un grand pays ; il vaut la peine de la bien servir.” (“ My children, France is a great country, it is worth while to serve her well.”)

CHAPTER II

THE BIRTH OF THE FRENCH SOUL

ONE good result, at least, of the tremendous struggle for life in which we are now engaged, will be that the world will have a better knowledge of, and a greater respect for, the true soul of France, than it had before.

This does not mean simply that our enemies are discovering that they had underestimated the strength of our national fibre, but also that our friends themselves will have to revise some of their opinions concerning us.

France has been commonly represented as a light-headed, light-hearted nation, whose ruling passion was the love of pleasure; and the admiration of some people for her on that account was more humiliating than the stern rebuke others thought fit to inflict upon us.

But few did recognize that, along with the artistic and optimistic temperament which marks our race, and which accounts to some extent for some of our glaring defects, there is in our constitution a stubborn quality of resistance, a disposition to hold on and to endure, a patience born of the sufferings of long ages. The French

are a nation of hard-working, hard-saving peasants, attached to their fields, which have been the property of their fathers centuries before the great Revolution—a property grievously taxed and perpetually contested till the glorious days of freedom—but which their owners tilled, improved and defended against foreign invaders, as well as against encroaching lords and tyrannical officials, in numberless wars, through fifteen centuries. There is a tragic element in French history ; there is iron in our blood, and it has been a surprise to many to discover that this country is yet very far, thank God, from having become so anæmic as some prophets had surmised.

It is one of the common mistakes made by our visitors to judge of France by Paris, and of Paris by the midnight gaiety of some of its boulevards. In reality, France is an agricultural nation, as England is an industrial one. Comparatively, France is the country which has fewest large cities. On a population of forty millions in round numbers, not more than one-fourth live in towns, mostly small ; the remainder dwell in villages, hamlets or farms. Of thirteen million families, nine millions are free-holders. Their houses may be small, ancient and rickety, but they belong to them, in many cases, from time immemorial. Old furniture is not a myth ; many are the well-to-do peasants, or even the common labourers, who sleep in the bed on which they were born, and on which they expect to die.

All this accounts to a large extent for the conservativeness of the French, which is real and deep, even though they have a love for outward changes which do not touch the root of things. This also accounts for the quality of the patriotism which is now so magnificently evident. Patriotism is derived from *Patria*, that which comes from the fathers. In fighting for France, every man feels that he is defending his own hearthstone.

If it be true that the education of a child begins—or should begin—an hundred years before its birth, it is truer still that the soul of a nation has been formed and educated through the long years of her history. In order to understand France, one should, therefore, know a little of her religious and moral struggles in the past. Much of this work will be devoted to tracing that history ; there is none more interesting.

The Gospel was brought to our shores at a very early date. At the time when St. Paul was visiting Rome, and perhaps Spain, Marseilles had already existed for five hundred years as a Greek colony, and there were such colonies further inland : Arles was one. How soon did those cities, then under Roman yoke, hear the Good News? There is evidence that a brisk trade was being carried on, in those times, between Greece and Asia Minor on the one hand, and the western shores of the Mediterranean on the other. No doubt some converts to the new

faith, hailing from Corinth or Smyrna, visited Marseilles very soon after the beginning of the Christian era.

There are in Provence and Languedoc very ancient legends, which poetry and art have made beautiful, telling of the landing, after a miraculous journey in an open boat without rudder or sail, of the Bethany family : Martha, Mary and Lazarus, with their negro servant Sara, Mary Magdalene and some other saints. Marseilles boasts of a crypt in which Lazarus is supposed to have lived, preached and baptized. In the mountains, north of that great city, is shown "la Sainte Baume" (the Holy Cave) where the Magdalene is said to have retired in pious seclusion. Martha's supposed grave is shown and greatly venerated in the crypt of a church at Tarascon, which is eight hundred years old. These legends are so deeply rooted in Southern France, that people who have retained very little faith are still attached to them ; they form part, as it were, of the national heirloom. The great Provençal poet, Frédéric Mistral, has given them new life by embedding them in his celebrated *Mireille*.

The legends should be discarded ; but the fact remains that Gaul was very early evangelized. Arles possesses a most interesting Christian cemetery — l'Allée des Alyscamps — with sarcophagi on both sides of the road, as on the Appian Way in Rome. There can be no doubt that, as

early as the year 150 A.D., there were large Christian communities in Vienne and in Lyons. The names of Irenæus and Pothinus belong to history: they were the first bishops of Lyons, having come there from Smyrna, where Irenæus had sat at the feet of Polycarp, who himself had been a disciple of St. John. The letter of the Church of Lyons addressed to the Church of Smyrna (which was, evidently, the mother-church) giving an account of the martyrdom of a large number of believers in the year 177, is still most captivating and wholesome reading, and its authenticity has never been questioned.

The whole of the Rhone valley, up to Lyons, is sacred ground. I never see the swift waters of the noble river, as they hurry down between so many ancient cities, without thinking of the thousands who, in those early days, were baptized in those waters, with which, later on, the blood of so many of them was to be mixed. That valley was the highway by which the Gospel, still free from the accretions of subsequent ages, penetrated into the heart of that which was then a heathen land, whose natives had added to their own idols those of their conquerors, the Romans, and of the Greek traders and artists who dwelt among them.

After these early events, history becomes clouded, as legends have grown over it and defaced it. However, it seems certain that, by

the close of the fifth century, the whole of the land now called France had become Christian, at least, nominally. Clovis, chieftain of the Franks and the first real King of France, professed Christianity at the instigation of his wife, Clotilde, and, together with his lords, was baptized in the city of Reims in 496.

In France, as everywhere else, the period of the Middle Ages was one of ignorance, brutality, superstition and clerical domination. The causes of this are many. The Church of the Emperors could hardly be the same as the Church of the Christ. When the force of the sovereigns was employed for the propagation of Christianity, Christianity in its true sense ceased to exist. Moreover, horde upon horde of barbarians from the forests of Germany, and from the unknown depths of the north and east of Europe, invaded the Roman Empire, and ruined the reign of law and civilization. The Church became the only power which could withstand the cruelty and savagery of those invaders; even in her degenerate state she was a moral force, and she conquered the conquerors (though in a very superficial manner). She thus became the protector of the weak and the hope of the downtrodden. But, when such protection became less necessary, the clergy kept their hold on the people and maintained it by superstitious fears; they were greatly helped in this by the lords and kings, who bought the allegiance of the Church and, in many cases,

her connivance with their evil deeds, by grants of land and increase of power.

In all these things, France was no exception among the nations newly formed out of the ruins of the Roman Empire. And yet there was, and has ever been, a remarkable difference. Though called the eldest daughter of the Church, because she was the first Western organized country to embrace Christianity, France was never as utterly submissive to Rome as other nations have been. Owing, no doubt, to the fact that she had received the Gospel in a purer form, a spirit of revolt against priestly rule has ever remained present with her, and it is there still.

In fact, it is one of the marvels of history that, while the Evangelical doctrine has been so utterly deformed as to be unrecognizable in the rites and superstitions which, for the masses of the people, represent the Christian religion, yet a latent Evangelism has never ceased to exist, and from time to time has made itself manifest by outbursts of light which have astonished and filled with fear the holders of ecclesiastical power. This has been the case in every nation submitted to papal rule, but nowhere more so than in France. There is no country where so-called "heresies"—which really means the protests of the dimly awakened popular conscience against the errors and sins of the dominating Church—have been so numerous, so constant, and on the

whole so successful, as France during the Middle Ages.

We shall not attempt to give a full enumeration of them, far less to describe them, as our acquaintance with the tenets of the "heretics" has to be derived, almost exclusively, from the biased accounts of the priests and monks who were their judges. Some of those heretics seem to have had a faint knowledge of the fundamental truths of the Gospel, and a true experience of grace. That seems to have been the case with Pierre de Bruys and his disciple Henri de Lausanne, who both lived in the twelfth century. At one time the whole of the south country was practically severed from Rome. Under the liberal government of the counts of Toulouse, an almost complete liberty of conscience prevailed in the vast and happy province called Languedoc, which rendered a nominal allegiance to the kings of France. The Albigenses were in great numbers there, and wielded great influence, the counts of Toulouse having themselves embraced their creed, which seems to have been a form of Gnosticism. There is little doubt that, in the atmosphere of freedom which prevailed in that region of France, a great number of people held the truth of the Gospel, without the doubtful elements which the various sects of Albigenses or *Cathares* had added to it.

However that may be, Rome could not long tolerate the existence of such a powerful religious

movement. At the instigation of Pope Innocent III., the King of France undertook an expedition which was called a crusade, and was put under the command of one of the most sanguinary men of history, Simon de Montfort (1209). It ended in the extermination of the Albigenses. The reader will remember how, when the city of Béziers, which was one of the main strongholds of the heretics, was taken by storm, the order being given to smite all the inhabitants with the edge of the sword, some one remonstrated with the fierce commander, arguing that there might be some true Catholics among them: "Kill them all," said he, "God will find out His own!"

It is probable, though difficult to ascertain, that many fugitives from the rich cities of Albi, Toulouse, Narbonne and from the fertile plains of Languedoc, fled to the near mountains of Cévennes, and to the Alps, then sparsely populated, where they settled and were left alone on account of their outward submission to Rome, and also of the difficulty of hunting them. In the seclusion of their mountain fastnesses, these settlers kept a spirit of independence which found its way out when the Reformation of the sixteenth century took place. This would explain how it is that Protestantism has taken a firm hold, which it has kept to this day, of a large portion of the southern slope of the Cévennes, while the northern has remained staunchly Catholic.

No disciple of Christ can afford to ignore the name of Pierre Valdo, the rich merchant of Lyons who, in the twelfth century, was converted to God by the action of the Holy Spirit upon his soul, and by the sudden death of one of his friends. He gave away his goods to the poor, after having provided for his wife and his two daughters, and became a humble servant of God, his special concern being to make known the Scriptures to the people, for which purpose he associated with two clerks, who made a translation of the New Testament in the vulgar tongue, which has not come down to us. He founded a community which is known in history as the Poor Men of Lyons; the object of its members being to live as nearly as possible up to the standard of the primitive Church.

Valdo and his companions soon became the objects of clerical hatred and persecution, and were ultimately compelled to flee to the neighbouring villages, then further, to the Alpine valleys, where they converted the natives, and formed with them that noble community known as the Waldenses (Vaudois), now a branch of the great Reformed family, but which is certainly the oldest Evangelical Church in Europe.

May not the rapid progress of Pierre Valdo's "heresy" in and around Lyons be somewhat accounted for by the fact that the embers of true Christianity had not absolutely died out in that old city, in which the memory of Pothinus

and Irenæus had never been obliterated, in spite of the darkness of the times? At all events, the awakening which took place under Pierre Valdo was a forerunner of the Reformation, and prepared the city, as in England Wycliff and his preachers prepared the way, for the great movement of the sixteenth century.

Another notable fact is that the ecclesiastical tribunal called the Holy Inquisition, which came into existence during the Middle Ages for the avowed purpose of destroying heresies—a tribunal which still sits at the Vatican, though it has not the same means to do harm which it had in those days—the Holy Inquisition was never able to establish itself on French soil. Other religious tribunals there were, bigoted and cruel enough, but none so cruel as the Inquisition. The fact is that, neither the kings, however superstitious some of them were, nor the courts of the realm, nor even the bishops themselves, and far less the people, were ever disposed to give to the papal militia those excessive prerogatives which they had acquired in other countries. A long and interesting account could be written of the perpetual feuds between the French Crown and the Roman See, from the early Capetian kings to St. Louis, Philippe-le-Bel, Louis XI., François I. and even Louis XIV., who had a quarrel with the Pope almost at the same time as when he signed the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The causes of these conflicts were

largely temporal; it was the question, mainly, of who should have the last word in the election of bishops. But one cannot help believing that the dissenting spirit which is so evident in the annals of France was a product of that latent Evangelism of which we have already spoken.

The same cause which made France so rich in "heretics" made her also rich in saints. By that word we do not mean the host of obscure recluses whose legendary lives are the only mental food permitted to the inmates of convents; but we mean really consecrated men and women, who, while they remained externally attached to the hierarchy of Rome, were at heart (though perhaps they did not know it) dissenters from the spirit of vainglory which characterized the higher clergy. The names of Martin de Tours, Bernard de Clairvaux, Jean Gerson (who was supposed, for a long time, to have written the famous *De Imitatione Christi*) and a number of others, testify that the lamp of truth, though dim, never ceased to burn in France, till the bright morning of the Reformation dispelled the gloom.¹

¹ Much could be said here concerning that expression of the religious soul of France which has been improperly called "Gothic" architecture; a form of art by which this and other countries were embellished with those magnificent poems in stone, the cathedrals of Paris, Amiens, Reims, Bourges, and many other places in France, and of Canterbury, Lincoln, Salisbury, etc., in England. It is a remarkable fact that no "Gothic" church exists in Rome itself, and there are very few in Italy. Thus, the Ogival architecture, born in France, attests in its own language the

It would be impossible to write on the soul of France without giving more than a passing notice of that wonderful figure which, more than any single individual, impersonated the common people of this country, and may be called, indeed, the very Soul of France. I refer to Jeanne d'Arc (Joan of Arc, as the English call her). A woman, no, a child, for she was not twenty when her task was fully done and she suffered her martyr death.

A shepherdess, born on the frontier of Lorraine at the beginning of the fifteenth century, her young heart was deeply moved by the sight of "the great pity there was in the kingdom of France," as she quaintly expressed herself, on account of the desolating wars which had lasted for nearly a century,—wars not only with England, whose kings, claiming French descent, proclaimed themselves kings of France,—but also between the rival factions of the French nobility. She saw visions, she heard voices from Heaven calling upon her to go and deliver her country. She attributed those voices to her favourite

peculiar and lofty character of French Christianity from the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries. The universalist and idealist character of the French soul in those centuries is also made evident by the fact that the Crusades—that noble, though clumsy, effort to unite all Christendom in a great sacred enterprise—originated in France. The first Crusade was proclaimed at the Council of Clermont by a French Pope, Urban II., and preached far and wide by the fiery monk, Peter the Hermit. Out of this movement there arose the order of Knighthood (*Chevalerie*), a generous attempt to put warriors under Christian restraints,

saints ; but the fact that she had heard them remained in her inmost consciousness till her death ; and it would be difficult to explain, if Heaven had nothing to do in the case, the wonderful success of the young heroine. Overcoming the very natural opposition of her father, mother and friends, she finally succeeded in winning the confidence of an old nobleman, who gave her a horse and authorized her to go with some devoted companions, with whom she travelled across the whole of France in order to see the king — indolent and easy-going Charles VII.—at Chinon on the Loire, where he was gaily spending his time while his kingdom was, so to speak, running through his fingers.

How she put new resolution in the hearts of the king and his lieges ; how, after due examination of her character and orthodoxy by the priests of the king's court, she was given the command of an army ; how, without ever shedding herself a drop of blood, she led her soldiers to victory, compelled the English to raise the siege of Orleans, took the king to Reims to be anointed (in that same beautiful cathedral which German shells have so wantonly damaged) ; how she stirred up the hearts of the people wherever she went, revealing France to herself, making, at last, the voice of the common people speak louder than the wretched and criminal ambitions of the great lords ; how she created, indeed, a national consciousness, without which there never could

have been any real patriotism among the people ; —all this would take a long time to recount. But, when one reflects that it was all achieved in the space of a single year by a poor peasant girl not out of her teens, one can hardly hesitate to acknowledge that Jeanne's claim to have been directed from above was legitimate, and thus is justified the motto long inscribed on our scutcheon : *Dieu protège la France*.

The most thrilling part, however, of Jeanne's history is not that which concerns her military prowess, so soon brought to an end by the treachery of a French lord, who, having taken her captive, sold her to her enemies. It is that part which is taken up by her trial before an ecclesiastical court at Rouen, presided over by a Romish bishop, Cauchon—a trial which ended in her being burned alive on the market-place of Rouen, on 30th May 1431. For this crime, the French and the English have to share the reproach of posterity. Happily, they are to-day redeeming that old evil deed of theirs, by sharing the risks and the glory of defending the eternal rights of nations, for which Jeanne d'Arc suffered and died with such wonderful heroism, five hundred years ago.¹

¹ "Yoked in knowledge and remorse now we come to rest,
Laughing at old villainies that Time has turned to jest ;
Pardoning old necessity no pardon can efface—
That undying sin we shared in Rouen market-place."

(Rudyard Kipling, "France").

In the course of that trial, Jeanne revealed what was the true soul of France in her time, what were the real feelings of the ignorant but shrewd French peasantry with regard to religion and the Church.

She was a good Catholic, of course. What else could she have been at the time she lived? She believed in the Church, her sacraments, her clergy, her saints. . . .

And yet she was a dissenter. And this is the peculiarity of her case. She set *her own conscience* as the ultimate judge of her inward motions. She held the spiritual, inward authority to be superior to the highest powers of the Church. When the bishop and the priests endeavoured to persuade her that her "voices" could not have come from God, since the Church had not sanctioned them, she maintained with indomitable energy—she, a country-girl of nineteen, facing the most formidable array of doctors and priests, with the scaffold looming in the distance!—that she knew Heaven had spoken to her. Neither threats nor allurements could wrench from her an act of full surrender to the Church on that cardinal point. When they reminded her that she owed obedience to the Pope and to the bishops, who were the voices of God to her, she replied: "Yes, our Lord God served first!"¹ And when they told her that, should she persevere in her refractory attitude, she would

¹ "Notre Sire Dieu premier servi!"

be excommunicated—which she was at the end—and even deprived of the privilege of attending Mass, she made this revolutionary answer, in which, if the reader will ponder over it a little, the whole Reformation is contained in seed: “God may enable me to hear it without you.” Finally, when, bound to the stake and the flames already ascending, she could hope no more for any intervention of angels or saints to rescue her (which, poor child, she seems to have expected almost to the last hour), she devoutly kissed the rude cross that an English soldier had made for her with two sticks, and murmured the sweet name, *Jesus* (no other, mark you: neither Mary, Joseph, nor any of her patron saints!), and then breathed her last.

This strange mixture of Romish superstition and spiritual independence, which would have been surprising enough in a man of some education and theological training, appears as simply marvellous in the case of a poor girl who had never learned to read, and knew nothing but her *Pater Noster*. It throws a flood of light on the real religion of the common people of France in the Middle Ages. Here, again, we find the evidence of that hidden Evangelism which we have noticed before, and which, by the action of the Divine Spirit, has been preserved throughout the centuries down to our very times. The existence of that element in the moral constitution of the French people explains, to a great extent,

many facts of its history : the sudden and wonderful rise of the Reformation, the idealism which has marked the great Revolution, and, finally, the chivalrous and, one may say, Christian spirit which animates the French nation at this time, enabling her to resist so tenaciously, in the defence of Justice and Liberty.

And so, Jeanne d'Arc was, and she remains, the symbolical impersonification of the French soul.

The French Catholics claim her as the national saint ; and, indeed, she was a true Catholic in her creed and practices, and a true saint by her simple faith and her pure life.

The French Protestants claim her as a forerunner of the Reformation ; and, indeed, hers was the spirit of Huss—who had died a few years before her—a spirit of holy rebellion against spiritual tyranny.

Modern France, liberal and republican, claims her as the founder of national democracy, and so she was, rising above king and nobles, and giving to the oppressed peoples the first glimpse of their own existence, of their common interests and ideals ; the first revelation of the power which lay in them.

Pure and generous, delicate and dignified, courageous and modest, a true heroine and a gentle maid, a devoted lover of Jesus—where could we find a nobler, holier figure, than Jeanne d'Arc, to impersonate the soul of France ?

CHAPTER III

THE REFORMATION AND THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

IT is not within our scope to give a history of the French Reformation. Our purpose is simply to trace the golden thread which unites together the spiritual movements which have taken place in this country at various times ; to show, as far as we can, that those movements, though many, varied and apparently unconnected, have sprung from the same source, the Gospel, under the influence of the Spirit of God, ever brooding over the soul of France.

Our quest is not an idle one. If it be demonstrated that the Spirit of God has never ceased to be at work in France, even in her darkest days, keeping alive the flickering light of the truth against the tremendous efforts of error and persecution, and bringing forth, now and then, some exceptionally beautiful Christian lives, we may conclude that God has a merciful purpose, yet to be realized, on behalf of this beloved land. The light which has been miraculously preserved must, some day or other, blaze out radiantly.

This is the hope which has burned in the

hearts of some of us for many years, and for which our fathers in the faith—holy men of God whose names are unknown, but whose record is on high—have lived and died. Yes, remembering God's gracious dealings with France throughout so many centuries, we are hoping and believing that she will yet astonish the world by the miracles of grace which will be wrought in her midst. And that hope is, perhaps, very near its fulfilment, for never was the soul of France stirred with nobler ideals than at this time of war and of unprecedented distress.¹

Some one—I think it was Amiel, the pessimistic philosopher—has said that every nation has “a fundamental paradox.” Nothing is truer than this. There are in every race of men—yea, in every individual—two different tendencies which, at times, may seem to work harmoniously together, but at other times are desperately at

¹ In the course of this and the following chapters we shall have to allude to the internal troubles caused, centuries ago, in this country, as in many other lands, by the difference in religious beliefs, or rather, by the spirit of religious independence, which was the outcome of the Reformation. The days of intolerance are now happily over; a spirit, not of toleration merely, but of mutual respect, has been reigning for many years. Moreover, the present war has brought together all patriotic citizens in a sacred union, above all political or religious differences. We wish, for our small part, to strengthen that union, by showing that Protestant Frenchmen have at all times served well their country, which they passionately loved; and by emphasizing the fact that those among them who have been most earnest in their faith, have also been most loyal, and have largely contributed, by their public and private qualities, to the making of the soul of France as it appears to-day before the world.

war. This opposition accounts for the tragedy of life everywhere and in every land. The Bible describes it in two very simple words: the flesh and the spirit. These may take various forms according to time, education, temperament, climate, etc., but there is no exception to the rule. Were the flesh to rule supreme, we should all be animals; were the spirit to have the mastery, we should all be saints.

The French soul, of course, has her "fundamental paradox." On the one hand, one notices in her a light-heartedness, a fondness for pleasure and enjoyment which at times amounts to frivolity; on the other hand, there is a passionate love for the Ideal, a longing for Truth, Beauty and Perfection, which will, at times, cause heroes and martyrs to abound. The first tendency is responsible for the practical materialism which seemed so prevalent a few years ago; the second, for those outbursts of devotion and sacrifice which have surprised the world from time to time, and never more than in the present war.¹

Never was that opposition more manifest in

¹ Perhaps the reader will inquire which, in the present writer's opinion, is the "fundamental paradox" of the English temperament. May I say, with due regard for British sensitiveness, that what strikes most a Frenchman is the opposition between a certain matter-of-fact practicalness, and the deep and genuine religious bent of the British mind? A city merchant seems quite another man, viewed on the Exchange, than he appears to be in his church pew on Sundays. Nor have we any right to suspect his sincerity: he is himself in both cases; only, as in every one of us, there are two selves in him,

France than during that eventful sixteenth century which saw the Renaissance and the Reformation. At first, the two seemed to be almost one, and helped each other mightily. But soon the contrast appeared; indeed, it became so marked, that war between the two became inevitable.

Two names may be mentioned as representing the first of those tendencies: Montaigne, the philosopher of agnosticism (though the word had not yet been coined), whose easy-going philosophy covered a deep distress of mind, and was all contained in that interrogation: "*Que sais-je?*" (What do I know?); and Rabelais, the cynical but witty and genial priest who, in the great awakening of the French mind which characterized his time, solved all questions very much in the same way as the Greek philosopher quoted by St. Paul: "Let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die" (1 Cor. xv. 32). Both were men of genius; and even they, profane as they were, could not but have glimpses of the true light, as some passages of their writings testify. But theirs was the spirit of compromise, fear of man, and, above all, love of the present world, as was the case with the great doctor of Rotterdam, Erasmus, who came so near to be a great Reformer, but failed for want of moral courage and deep religious experience.

The names of the men who, one may truthfully affirm, represented at that time the nobler side of the French soul, are those of Lefèvre d'Etaples,

Calvin, Farel, Coligny. A host of others might be added; but these were the greater lights, amidst a galaxy of choice spirits.

The influence of those Frenchmen, of John Calvin especially, has been world-wide and still continues. The cause for which they worked, fought and died has not succeeded in the country of their birth so much as they had hoped,—though it has succeeded far more than could appear on the surface,—but it has been victorious in many lands. It has deeply impressed the mental, moral and spiritual constitution of a large part of Europe: England, Scotland, Holland, Switzerland, Hungary and large portions of Germany; it has been the creative power which brought to existence the American Commonwealth, and even now is the main force that rules it. Even Roman Catholicism, as appears evident by its inner history, has been compelled to reform itself in some of its most crying practices, by the tremendous effect of the search-lights which the Reformation brought upon it.

And it is the pride (a most pardonable one) of the French Reformed, that their Reformation owed nothing to foreign influence. Rather, it has been the other way. Whatever debts our Churches may have contracted towards those of other lands in the following centuries,—debts which we shall never decline to acknowledge gratefully,—it must be recognized that the French gave to them, in the sixteenth century, the first

capital on which their spiritual fortunes have been built.

This is a most important point. Reduced as we have been through the vicissitudes of the past to a comparatively small number, we are often looked upon by some of our countrymen, and not always by the most ignorant of them, as being the disciples of a foreign religion. Nothing can be more untrue, and there are few things that are more harmful than this lie.

The first translators of the Scriptures in French, Lefèvre d'Etaples and Robert Olivétan, this latter, first on the originals, were French scholars. Calvin wrote his *Institutes* in Latin, then in French; and this was the first work of any great importance to have been written in the common language of the people; for, up to that time, scholars would have thought it beneath them to write learned treatises in another tongue than the Latin. And the *Institutes* of Calvin is considered by literary authorities who care not for his doctrine, as the first great monument in French, the one book which has done most to bring our language, which was still unshaped and unfixed, to the rank of a systematized and cultured tongue.

We can do no better here than to translate a few lines from a contemporary *littérateur*, M. Emile Faguet, member of l'Académie Française, who has just died, all too early for French letters, which he adorned. M. Faguet was not a Pro-

testant, but he was an impartial critic, greatly respected by all parties :

“Protestantism is said by some to be an importation from Germany,—an importation which, consequently, will ever retain the stamp of its foreign origin. Nothing can be more false. Protestantism is French, or, if you prefer it, French Protestantism is French, of French origin. There has been a French Reformation, which owed nothing to the German nor to the English ones, and *which has preceded both*. There was a Lefèvre d'Etaples before Calvin, before Luther, before Knox. . . .

“And I need not say that, as far as Calvinism is concerned, it is purely French, not only because it was a Frenchman, Calvin, who created it, but also because *all* the co-workers of Calvin in Geneva—nine out of ten, if you like—were Frenchmen. Protestant Geneva is a French religious colony. There has not been an importation from Geneva to France, but an exportation from France to Switzerland. There is nothing more French, more ‘old French,’ than the Protestantism of France.”

The following lines of the article we are quoting are worth underlining :

“The French Protestants are so really French that truly they have been the salt of France. . . . We must acknowledge that, except for political circumstances, all who, in the sixteenth century, had in their hearts a vivid religious and moral

sentiment, all who had an ideal, became Protestants. We must acknowledge this, without bargaining in the least.

"If, as seems undisputable to me, Protestantism has been the means of accomplishing in France the Catholic reform, has brought about Gallicanism and Jansenism, it may be truly said that Protestantism has well deserved of France; and, at all events, one must see that it has been so mingled with French history, that it must be acknowledged as French, as Old French, as French as it is possible to be.

"Add to this that the Protestants are the oldest French Republicans. The monarchy in fighting them, did not make a mistake; for the St. Bartholomew was a crime, but not at all an error. . . ."

The testimony of the distinguished writer might be strengthened by many quotations from historians such as Michelet, Quinet and others. Indeed, it is the voice of Truth itself.¹

¹ At the back of the church of the Oratoire, in the heart of Paris, facing the Louvre on the Rue de Rivoli, there stands the marble statue of Gaspard de Coligny. He is represented standing, his hand upon the hilt of his sword, in a pensive attitude. An open Bible shows these words, so descriptive of the man: "He held fast, as seeing Him who is invisible." Two beautiful figures, representing Religion and Country, are seated at his feet. Admiral Coligny was the type of the Huguenot statesman and general. Loyal to his earthly king, and passionately patriotic, he never allowed anything to weaken his faith and allegiance to the Christ of the Bible. His prudence, caution and wonderful endurance, along with his indomitable courage and hopefulness in the midst of the most adverse circumstances, show him to have belonged to

The best proof that the soul of France was, in those days, so linked with the Reformation as to be one with it, is found in the wonderful influence which the Scriptures, published in the language of the people, exerted on the whole nation. Indeed, long before then, as we have already shown, as far back as the twelfth century, the Scriptures had been the instrument of a powerful and wide-spread movement towards primitive Christianity. After the twelfth century the dissemination of the Holy Book seems to have been carried on with continued zeal. In the National Library, Paris, there are sixty translations, either in part or in full, of the Bible, all of these dating from the thirteenth and fourteenth century alone. But when we come to the sixteenth, just after the discovery of the printing-press, we are amazed to find that the Bible has become the most popular of books in France.

The honour of having been foremost in this great work belongs to a man who was of a most retiring disposition, and who, like Simeon of old, the same race which now produces such men as those who command our armies. Coligny was one of the first to fall under the poignards of the assassins on St. Bartholomew's night, August 24, 1572. His son-in-law, Téligny, was also murdered, and the young widow, Coligny's only child, escaped to Holland, where, a few years afterwards, she married William the Silent, the founder of the Netherlands Commonwealth. The present Queen of Holland is the direct descendant of Louise de Coligny. It should never be forgotten that Coligny's monument was erected as the result of the persevering and most unwearied efforts of that late great preacher, Eugène Bersier. So long as that statue stands, it will be impossible to question the patriotism of the French Protestants.

heralded the coming of a day in which he was not permitted to enter fully. His name was Lefèvre d'Etaples, born in 1435, only four years after the death of Jeanne d'Arc, and sixteen years after that of John Huss. He became one of the great humanists of his time, and a devout student of the Scriptures. In 1512 he published a Latin translation of Paul's Epistles from the Greek, with a commentary. In 1523 his French New Testament was printed. Nine months after its first publication, that New Testament had gone through four editions. In one of his Prefaces the good man wrote :

"The time will soon come when Christ will be preached purely and without admixture of human traditions, which is not the case now. O Gospel! Fountain that springs unto eternal life, when wilt thou reign in all thy purity? When will Christ be all and in all? When will the one study, the one comfort, the one desire of every one be the knowledge and the universal progress of the Gospel? When will all be firmly persuaded, as our fathers were, that the primitive Church, clothed in martyrs' blood, had understood that to know nothing but the Gospel, is to know everything?"¹

"From 1509 to 1541," says M. Lortsch, "there appeared thirty-six editions of the Scriptures

¹ This quotation and much in this chapter is borrowed from the excellent work by Pasteur D. Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France*.

translated by Lefèvre ; one of Paul's Epistles (in Latin) ; one of the Pentateuch ; six of the Psalter ; *twenty-three* of the New Testament, two of the Old, three of the whole Bible ; other editions followed."

Robert Olivétan was a cousin of Jean Calvin, whom he initiated in the Reformation. "That, by itself," says Professor Emile Doumergue, "would deserve for him our imperishable gratitude." He was the first to write a complete translation of the Bible from the original tongues.

It is most remarkable that Olivétan's translation was prepared at the request, and printed at the expense, of the Waldensian Church of the Alps, which, as the reader remembers, was a fruit of the labours of Pierre Valdo. That same translation was the basis of Ostervald's work, which, with frequent revisions and alterations, is the most largely used in the French churches to-day. If this be not true apostolic succession, where shall we find it?

The book found its way everywhere. It was devoutly read by Marguerite de Navarre, sister of Francis I., and by the king himself. A non-Protestant writer, M. Lenient, says: "Side by side with the preachers, the invincible army of the colporteurs was organized. A missionary of a new sort, the colporteur followed the course of the Rhine. . . . On the French side, he stopped first at Lyons, first stage of the Reformation ; thence he radiated into Burgundy and Cham-

pagne, right to the gates of Paris. By the long valley where the ashes of Cabrières and Mérindol were still smoking,¹ he entered into the heart of the southern country, in the Cévennes gorges, in the cities of Nîmes and Montpellier. Indefatigable, tramping with his knapsack on his back, or ambling by the side of his mule, he entered castles, hostels, cottages, an apostle and a preacher all in one, selling and expounding the Word of God, alluring the ignorant, as well as the clever, by the attraction of the engravings, and also by the forbidden character of his books. That clandestine propaganda was immensely effective."

Even members of the nobility and men of culture became colporteurs in order to scatter the Word of God. "They did not think," says M. Matthieu Lelièvre, "that they were derogating in burdening their shoulders with the knapsack. There were shoemakers, but also gentlemen, among the colporteurs. Faith and zeal made all social conditions equal."

"Scholars and noblemen," says Calvin, "disguise themselves as colporteurs, and under shadow of selling their goods, offer to all faithful the weapons needed for the holy fight of faith. They go all over the kingdom, selling and explaining

¹ Cabrières and Mérindol, two villages of Provence which had been settled by Waldenses who had fled there for refuge, and which were utterly destroyed and their inhabitants murdered by the sanguinary Baron d'Oppède. These villages, however, were rebuilt, and are even now inhabited by a majority of Protestant people.

the Gospel." It should be remembered that any one caught at this contraband work was doomed to death. In 1528, twelve noblemen of the diocese of Chambéry were beheaded for having thus scattered the Scriptures. "Nevertheless," wrote the bishop after their execution, "there is no lack of babblers who go on reading those books, and who will not sell them for any amount of money." Merle-d'Aubigné mentions Queen Marguerite de Navarre among the propagators of the book. "Having fled from palaces and cities where the persecuting spirit of Rome and of the Parliament¹ was raging, she applied herself intensely to give a new impulse to the Evangelical movement in the South. Her activity was tireless. She sent colporteurs who insinuated themselves in houses, and who, under pretext of selling jewels to the ladies, offered them New Testaments printed in fine type, with red linings, bound in calf and gilded on the edges. The sight of those fine books incited them to read them."

Some of those colporteurs were wealthy, as for instance Etienne de la Forge, who lived in Rue Saint-Martin, Paris. He was a friend of Calvin and Farel. He printed the Gospel at his own expense, and distributed it among the poor, whom he helped also with his alms. He was hanged, and his body burnt, in 1534.

¹ This name should not mislead the English reader. The French Parliaments, or Parlements, of which there was one in most large cities, were courts of justice, not representative assemblies.

One must refrain from quoting much more, though the subject is most thrilling for lovers of the Bible, as I hope my readers are, or will begin to be. For what book has ever created such enthusiasm? We must be permitted another quotation, which we borrow from M. Matthieu Lelièvre:¹

“In the city of Avignon, which belonged to the Pope, the Bible was not better treated. . . . One day, after dinner, some prelates were idling about in the company of women of doubtful character. After having purchased for them some pictures and portraits which Crespin calls ‘dishonest,’ their attention was attracted by the window of a small merchant, who had recently settled in Avignon; he had exposed for sale some Latin and French Bibles. The prelates expressed their astonishment: ‘Who has made you so bold,’ they said to him, ‘as to advertise such goods in this city? Do you not know that those books are forbidden?’ The bookseller, without losing his balance, replied, ‘Is not the Holy Bible as good, at least, as those pretty images and pictures you have bought for these ladies?’ He had hardly spoken, when the Bishop of Aix, who was one of the prelates thus taken to task, cried out: ‘I am willing to lose my share of Paradise if this man be not a Lutheran!’ He was not making a mistake in

¹ *Portraits et Récits Huguenots*, par Matthieu Lelièvre (pp. 274-282).

concluding that where the Bible and moral purity were together, there was true evidence of Protestantism. . . . The poor man was at once arrested and sent to prison.

“On the next day he was brought before the judges, in the presence of the bishops, and questioned. Among his words were these : ‘You of Avignon, are you alone in all Christendom to be in dread of the Testament of our Heavenly Father? And why will you forbid that the instrument and authentic letters of God’s salvation should be everywhere published and heard? Will you prevent that which Jesus Christ has given power to His holy apostles to publish in every tongue, so that the Holy Gospel should be taught to every creature? Why do you not forbid, rather, those books and pictures which are dishonest, or even blasphemous, and which incite men to evil deeds and despite of God?’

“The indomitable fidelity of the bookseller, his refusal to make amends to the prelates, to whom he declared that they were priests of Bacchus and Venus rather than true shepherds of the Church of Christ, sealed his doom; he was sent to the stake on the same day. And, in order to make quite plain the cause of his condemnation, two Bibles were hung to his neck, one in front and one behind. ‘These,’ says quaint Crespin, ‘were not false ensigns, for truly the poor bookseller had the Word of God in his heart and in his

mouth, and he never ceased, on the road to the scaffold and on the dying spot, to exhort and admonish the people to read Holy Scriptures, so that several were moved to inquire after the truth.' " ¹

From such facts as this (and it would be easy to quote scores of such) may we not rightly infer that the soul of France was in those days powerfully influenced by the Gospel? For, with due regard to the baptism of the Spirit which those martyrs had received, and which enabled them to face everything, do not their assurance and boldness, their confident appeals to the people against their judges, show that they felt the heart of the democracy to be with them?

Yes, the heart of the people, at least in the villages and smaller towns, was with them. But not the hearts of the kings of the Valois family, who reigned for nearly the whole of that century: François I., the best of the number—gay and careless, chivalrous and generous; Henri II., bigoted and immoral (how often those two qualities appear together in men of that time!), the husband of Catherine de Médicis, that unscrupulous and heartless woman whose memory has gone down to posterity as that of a Jezebel; and their three sons who reigned successively, none of them having any issue, François II., the boy-husband of Mary, Queen of Scots; Charles IX.,

¹ *Crespin's Histoire des Martyrs*. Crespin's book is for the French Reformation what Knox's is for the English.

who was responsible, with his mother, for the St. Bartholomew massacre ; and, lastly, the infamous Henri III., who perished by the hand of a fanatical monk, leaving the throne to his next of kin, his remote cousin, Henri de Bourbon, king of Navarre, who, at the time of Henri III.'s death, was a Huguenot.

It has been the evil fortune of France that, at the most pregnant period of her history, she was ruled by an unworthy woman and her nefarious sons. And yet, such was the power of the new currents of life which then ran through Europe, that a short time before the St. Bartholomew, over two thousand Reformed communities had been formed throughout France, almost twice as many as there are to-day, though the population was not one-half of what it is now. One-fourth, perhaps, of the whole kingdom had become Evangelical. The Psalms, translated into French verse by the Court poet, Clément Marot, were sung to popular tunes, and might be heard everywhere. Catherine de Médicis herself seems, at one time, to have contemplated the necessity, in order to keep her power, of granting full liberty to the new faith. For she had to contend with a strong party, more bigoted than herself, headed by the Duke of Guise, and which, under the name of the Holy League, and with the support of Philip of Spain, aimed at no less than the overthrow of the reigning family. It must be said that the Paris populace was on the side of the

Ligueurs, and was savagely opposed to the Evangelical faith.

It was in order to overcome that opposition, and to pacify the country, that Henri of Navarre, now become Henri iv., recanted from the Reformed religion, which he had professed at one time with great zeal, though never with that spiritual devotion which had been so marked in his mother, Jeanne d'Albret. He remained, notwithstanding his conversion, obnoxious to the extreme Catholic party, and died by a Jesuit's poignard in 1610. He had given the Edict of toleration which is so celebrated in history as the Edict of Nantes (1598), by which Protestants, though not on equality with the Catholics, obtained the right to worship under certain restrictions. This the clergy could not forgive. The Edict was never strictly observed, and after long and numerous violations, was finally abolished or revoked by King Louis xiv. in 1685.

The recantation of King Henri iv. set an example to a large number of lords and noblemen, lawyers and upper-class merchants, who had joined the new faith in the hope that it might become that of the majority, but could not resolve themselves into being the followers of a defeated cause. Thus the Reformed Churches, which at the beginning had numbered among their adherents some of the highest names of the land, were gradually reduced, with a few fine exceptions,

to the peasantry and the common people. Even then, however, the Evangelical cause remained very important, both as to numbers and as to moral and social influence.

And then began a screwing process. Year after year the few liberties guaranteed by the Edict of Nantes were reduced; persecutions on the slightest pretext were set up at the constant instigation of the clergy; many Reformed places of worship were pulled down; non-Catholics were allowed to live on mere sufferance. Yet they were the real soul of France, for the morality of the nation would have sunk very low but for the influence of the two millions of law-abiding, God-fearing Huguenots.

These persecutions increased in such a manner that the long-suffering people¹ finally resorted to arms. Many have blamed them for this; but whatever view is entertained, the fact remains that both in England and in France, as well as in other countries, the present religious liberties are the result of the revolt of the people against tyrannical powers. Perhaps it would have been more heroic to suffer and to die without resistance; but one must remember that all Huguenots had not necessarily been "born again." Only regenerate men could raise themselves to such sublime heights. As for the others, "Let him judge them who can, let him condemn who dares."

¹ A proverbial saying of that period was: "Patience de Huguenot."

It must be remembered, too, that the notion of separation between Church and State, between the temporal and the spiritual, is wholly modern. The Huguenots, like the English Puritans, were imbued with the spirit and ideas of Old Testament theocracy. They had some good and great preachers, such as Claude, Daillé, Jurieu, Basnage; but the wooing note was rare in the sermons of that time. They preached the law with greater zest than the Gospel. To be a loyal Protestant was, by the so-called "faithful," considered the main thing. They had the fear of God, more than the spirit of joyous Christian liberty.

Such as they were, none were better than they in their time, and they were the salt of the earth.

CHAPTER IV

THE REVOCATION

WE now come to the greatest catastrophe that ever befell the soul of France, and in which she was well-nigh wounded to death: we refer to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

If the reader ever has the opportunity, in happier times, to visit the royal castle of Fontainebleau, so romantically situated in the heart of the beautiful forest of that name, let him linger a while in the small and dark sitting-room which was Madame de Maintenon's private apartment. Here, on October 17, 1685, Louis XIV. by a stroke of his pen gave the greatest blow to the fortunes of France that she had ever suffered. And at the same time he signed, all unconsciously, the death-warrant of his own dynasty, when signing the Revocation, mainly, but not wholly, at the instigation of his morganatic wife, Jeanne d'Aubigné, Marquise de Maintenon.

It is dramatic to realize that this woman had been born and brought up in the Reformed faith. Her grandfather was the celebrated poet and soldier, Agrippa d'Aubigné, one of the noblest characters of France and of the Reformation.

But her father lived and died in ignoble fashion. There are few instances in feminine history of fortunes similar to those of Jeanne d'Aubigné, who, from being the widow of a cripple, Scarron, rose by intrigue and complacency with Madame de Montespan, whose illegitimate children were confided to her care, to be, finally, the secret spouse of Louis XIV. and his occult adviser, especially in religious affairs.

As already intimated, the Revocation had in reality begun long before this fateful date. On the slightest pretexts, ministers had been fined and imprisoned; in later years, places of worship had been pulled down. Large sums of money had been shamelessly spent in buying so-called "conversions." The *Dragonnades* had begun in 1681.

Here appears the utter immorality of the wholesale so-called conversion of hundreds of thousands by physical compulsion. This has contributed more than anything else to the deterioration of the popular conscience in all countries where this compulsion has been practised; and to that indifference in religious matters which prevailed in the two following centuries. The Church was the great teacher of unbelief, by the very fact that she lowered religion to the level of a temporal, political interest.

God sometimes allows evil to have its full course. The execrable policy nearly succeeded. French Protestantism was not altogether stamped

out, but it ceased to be a growing and influential cause in its native land, while it became a factor of progress and prosperity in many lands.

Given a Wesley or a Whitefield to set ablaze the true Gospel spirit in their midst, the two millions of Reformed Christians who existed in France before the Revocation (on a total population of almost twenty millions) might have shaped the history of France in a quite different way. Who can tell what mistakes might have been spared to this noble country ; what bloody experiments, such as the Reign of Terror, she might have escaped ? And what a part she would have played in the greater work of the world's evangelization ! As to this, however, there is still reason to hope. We have a sort of intuition that a new Gospel day is about to rise for France, and that her greatest achievements as a civilizing power have only begun.

The light was nearly quenched, but not altogether. True, the majority of the Huguenots sullenly submitted to what seemed the inevitable ; those, especially, who lived in cities, or held large property. Nearly all the nobility which, so far, had held fast, gave way ; so did the financiers, the State functionaries, the lawyers. So did, alas ! a number of ministers. Of the latter, those who did not apostatize fled with their families to more hospitable lands, especially to Holland, which became, before and after the Revocation, the great "refuge," as the native Church was

Calvinistic, and therefore more congenial to the refugees than either the Lutheran Church or the Church of England. Many also—indeed, tens of thousands—fled to Switzerland. The population of Geneva, for instance, increased by one-fourth on account of the influx of the emigrants. Large numbers settled in London and also in Kent. Canterbury was full of them. The walls of the crypt in Canterbury Cathedral still testify to the presence, at that time, of the weavers' looms which, for want of room elsewhere, had been set up in those gloomy recesses. To this day French services are held in that same crypt.

Some went as far as the Cape of Good Hope, where they mixed with the Dutch settlers, giving rise to the sturdy race of the Boers.

Imagine a country deprived at once of the thirtieth part of its population (as nearly as one is able to guess), and that not the refuse, but the best, morally and materially! First in commerce, in agriculture, in arts; first in learning; above all, first in right-thinking and right-living: such were the Huguenots. "The consequences (of the Revocation) were shocking. The general level of public morality seemed to become lower. The mutual control of the two parties having ceased to exist, hypocrisy became more needful; the hidden evils of conduct became apparent. This immense inheritance of people who, while still alive, were treated as dead, became a prey. The king was throwing it through the windows; people

rushed to pick it up. Ignoble scene. What remained, for a whole century, was the existence of a people of outcasts (not much more than one million) living under the terror, under the law of suspects."¹

It is not in the scope of this work to give lengthy details of the sufferings of those Frenchmen who, for conscience' sake, abandoned their country, selling their property for a mere song—to be more precise, giving a house for a horse on which to place their little ones; paying enormous sums to the guides who undertook to pass them through the frontiers,—emigration being forbidden,—or spending days and nights in exposure on the Channel, aboard some little craft manned by oarsmen. But what joy, mingled with sorrow, when at last they reached the friendly shore! They had to learn a foreign speech; to get accustomed to new and, to them, strange ways of living; to find their pittance by all sorts of occupations; they who had been in affluence and were looked up to by their countrymen, had now to eat the bread of exile, always so hard and bitter. . . . But all was forgotten in the newly-found privilege of worshipping God freely, of associating with their brethren without fear of molestation, of being able to rear and train their children in their own beloved faith. And many of them lived in the hope, which was not to be

¹ J. Michelet, *Louis XIV. et la Révocation de l'Edit de Nantes*, Preface.

realized, of seeing France open her arms to them, bidding them to return. . . .

The number of those who were able to flee has been variously estimated. It can hardly have been less than half a million, and probably was more. Whole cities were depopulated, and also districts.¹

As a sample of the sort of men these exiles were, we shall quote the following story from the book recently published by Pasteur Matthieu Lelièvre :²

“Nothing is more touching than the tale of that good middle-class man (his name was Jean Nissolle, of Ganges), who left everything, goods and family, and went into exile in order to keep faithful to his God ; he reminds us of *Christian*,

¹ We cannot, without emotion, even after many years, recall a visit to the United States, and the reception which on that occasion was offered to us, as one of a deputation from France, in the city of Washington. As we were standing by the host, shaking hands with the kind visitors, the flower of the Churches and of the Christian society of the Capitol city, they would, one after another, whisper with a smile : “I have come from Huguenot ancestry” ; and they gave us the names of those ancestors who, two hundred years before, had arrived, in most cases, penniless, in that land of refuge. In the course of the same trip, after a lecture to college students in some little town of Virginia, an old gentleman who had been invited to attend, approached us : “Sir, said he, “we are proud to have in this neighbourhood a number of old Huguenot families. They are the best people to be found in this country. When any one of their young men asks for one of our daughters in marriage, we need not make inquiries as to his moral character ; his Huguenot blood answers for him ; there has never been a case when it was not all right !”

² *De la Révocation à la Révolution*, p. 145.

the hero of Bunyan, fleeing from the City of Destruction without heeding the entreaties of his wife, children and friends.

“His wife and relatives, who, when the dragoons had arrived, had been promptly running to sign the act of abjuration, tried to persuade him to do as they had done. They urged on him that his flight would leave without any consolation the sick whom he was in the habit of visiting; that it was merely a matter of form, which would satisfy the priest, who would not require any further act of catholicity. Shaken for a moment, he fell on his knees to ask for God’s counsel. ‘The good God, he says, heard me at once. He filled my heart with a true and solid joy; He caused me to taste the sweetest tokens of His love and grace; He strengthened my faith, revived my hope, and so fortified my resolve to suffer anything rather than to forsake His holy religion, that the most dreadful ordeals could not have shaken me. Thus it is ever that God makes Himself felt and found by those who seek Him with all their hearts.’

“One cannot read without emotion the account of the numerous deliverances of which he was the object. In the midst of perils of every kind, his only recourse was in God, and he supported his soul by prayer. ‘God, says he, kept me company to the end, and led me as by the hand.’ He arrived in Geneva on Thursday, May 15, 1678, just in time to attend service in the

cathedral of St. Peter (which, ever since the Reformation, has been used for Protestant worship). 'It was then that my soul was transported with joy and ravishments which can neither be expressed nor even understood, except by those to whom God has granted the same grace. I thanked that great God with all my heart for the peculiar help with which He had favoured me, in bringing me to a land where one could serve Him without fear and in perfect freedom.'"

What became of his wife and friends we do not know. How literal in this case and in thousands of others was the obedience to our Lord's command, which only redeemed souls, filled with supernatural power, could thus carry out: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me."

But what of those who remained? Most of them recanted outwardly, while secretly retaining their attachment to the Bible; some attending forbidden meetings in the dead of night, and hoping and praying for better times. Those better times came indeed, but only a hundred years afterwards, at the Revolution of 1789. Many, in the first generation, contrived to lead, as it were, two lives, Protestants at heart, Romish in outward performance. But the second generation, and still more the third, were for ever estranged from the Gospel. Some even became

strict Romanists. As to the great bulk, they fell into scepticism. Some of the most brilliant philosophers and *littérateurs* of the eighteenth century, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Beaumarchais, had Protestant fathers. Among the Court ladies who gave to the Régence its reputation for corrupt elegance, were the daughters of some of those noblemen who had bought the maintenance of their estates and honours at the cost of their consciences.

One should have expected that the highest and apparently spiritually-minded authorities of the Church, Bossuet and Fénelon, for instance, would have protested against the shallowness and insincerity of the pretended "conversions." But while they did something towards instructing their unwilling penitents, they did not blame the means which had been used to bring them to the fold. There is no doubt that the strong and tenacious hold that infidelity had on the French mind during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was the direct outcome of this violation of conscience. How can the Church, even to-day, complain with fairness of the abandonment of religion by the masses? She herself is to blame; she desecrated the human soul, by exacting spiritual obedience through the fear of physical punishment.

Let it not be supposed, however, that the Revocation annihilated the soul of France, or that it emigrated to foreign lands. If many left

the country, and if many more committed a sort of spiritual suicide, a remnant, a glorious remnant, refused either to emigrate or recant. And although their number was small, and their station in life for the most part lowly, yet it is not an exaggeration to say that their fidelity to God, to Christ and to the Bible saved the French Church, and even saved France.

After the ministers had fled to Holland and other foreign parts, God raised up men of the people, labourers and mechanics, who gathered with their brethren in secret places by night, and, as well as they could, filled the duties which the departed ministers had left vacant. In the south especially, where Huguenots were far more numerous than in other parts of the country, these meetings were frequent and largely attended; sometimes two or three thousand people, or more, would assemble in a secluded spot—an open space in the forest, a deep ravine, a large cave, or some mountain top, from which it could be easy to see the soldiers at a long distance. There they would sing their psalms and pray with passionate tears; then listen—how intently!—to the *impromptu* exhortations of their brethren, some of whom had real gifts of oratory and a deep knowledge of the Bible. In those services the “preachers of the wilderness,” as they were called, never failed to pray for the king. The most pathetic expressions of loyalty to him who had stolen their children from them, issued from

the mouths of those heroic confessors of the faith.

The penalties for attending those meetings were death by the rope for the preachers, and for the laymen, galleys for life. The women and girls were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment.

CHAPTER V

THE SOUL OF FRANCE ON THE GALLEYS

IF the soul of a nation lies in what is best in that nation, if, according to our Lord's declaration, the real possessors of the earth are the meek, those who suffer for righteousness' sake, then it is true, as Michelet has perceived it, "that all true nobility, all true morality, had been driven to the galleys and found there its refuge."

It is to be regretted that the remembrance of our martyrs has been allowed to grow dim in our Churches and in our young people's societies. The younger members of our families have been allowed to feed their imaginations with shallow stories, while they remained in deep ignorance as to the great and noble lives of their spiritual ancestors. What tales of adventure and heroism might we find in all literature, more thrilling than the true records of those who, in France, in England and elsewhere, have suffered for Christ's sake?

A better acquaintance with those sacred memories would greatly benefit the Christian Church of our day. While the Roman and Greek Churches hold up constantly before their

followers the glories and merits of their "saints," so many of whom were spurious, we have fallen into neglect and disregard of our own. We know full well that no martyr, however sublime, should take our eyes away from the solitary splendour of the Cross of Christ. But is there not the danger of falling into the other extreme? Is not the "cloud of witnesses" set before us in the Scriptures that we, by their example, should be better able to "look unto Jesus"?

A great mistake of modern Christianity, as it seems to us, has been to try to induce men to come to Christ mainly by the attractions of prosperity and temporal blessing. It is true that, generally speaking, the Gospel brings to a man whose life has become clean, temporal advantages which are denied to those who live in gross sin. But the present war is bringing out one of the most mysterious laws of our nature, viz. that suffering for a great cause is a source of austere joy, and even of exultation; and that men will be attracted by the very risks and losses to be incurred, more than by motives of interest, when fighting for some worthy object. May it not be that one of the reasons which account for the sense of staleness which has attached to much of present day "piety," has been, that there is very little cross-bearing attached to it?

After all, while it is true that saints are not to be worshipped, it is true also that real worship is inseparable from "the communion of saints";

nor should we limit that communion to the saints on earth only. The genuine saints, those who lived in the early centuries, are the common property of all Christendom; they belong to us also. And we have, besides, the martyrs that Rome has made. In the annals of early persecutions there are few characters that outpass in beauty such men as Latimer, Cranmer, Ridley, or Anne du Bourg, Coligny, Claude Brousson, though we do not put the word "saint" before their names. And what of those of whom we shall now speak, the galley-slaves, with whom, truly, was the real soul of France?

The number of the men who were sent to the galleys because they refused to renounce "the heresy of Luther and Calvin" must have reached 2500. Of these, the names of 2224 have been found. The last of these "convicts for the faith" were freed in the year 1775, only fourteen years before the great Revolution.

In every case the sentence was for life. Other galley-slaves (*galériens*, in French) were not all detained till their death. Many of them served for a limited number of years, the others—even the rogues and murderers of the worst type—might be pardoned for good behaviour, especially in battle. It was the rule to liberate those who had been severely wounded in action. But the rule was never applied in the case of Huguenots. Once chained to their oar and to their bench, they had to live and die there, unless they con-

sented to recant. And *that* was made very easy for them: if they only took off their bonnets while Mass was being said on the ship, that was considered as an act of conformity, and very little more was required. The number who availed themselves of such facilities was small. Most of the confessors died in the galley-hospital at Marseilles, the port which was the main headquarters of the Royal Navy in that time.

The galleys were war-vessels manned by oarsmen. Two hundred and fifty of them were usually needed for one galley. Each oar was served by six convicts. They were bound to their benches by a chain riveted to one of their legs. There they remained, night and day, summer or winter. When the galley was in motion, the work of the oars, each of which was fifty feet long, was extremely exhausting; and at the least sign of weakening the petty officers, or *comites*, who had the oversight of the gang, struck with a rope, or an ox-nerve, the bare backs of the *galériens*. In time of war, in attack or retreat, blows were dealt liberally to stimulate the unhappy convicts. Though they were non-combatants, they were more exposed than others to the artillery of the enemy.

Death on the scaffold would have been a lighter sentence than this slow dying. Think of this: Men of culture, many of them, and in every case men of superior morality, having to spend their lives in the roughest of occupations, and in

the utter absence of every comfort, without any privacy, constantly exposed to the insults of their tormentors and to the gibes of their companions, who, though chained to the same infamous bench, were courting the favour of the Romish authorities and chaplains by adding new sufferings to those of their Huguenot comrades.

In order to get to those floating hells, the newly sentenced convicts had to travel through the country on foot, in gangs or *chaînes*, tramping day after day, sometimes for weeks and even months, according to the distance they had to cover from the place of their condemnation to the port of Marseilles.

“Jean Marteilhe, who travelled thus from Dunkirk to Marseilles by way of Le Havre, gives (in his Memoirs) painfully realistic details of the cruel treatment to which he and his companions were subjected. He says that he suffered more during that long journey than during the twelve years he spent on the galleys. That which, perhaps, was even more painful than the endless marching through France, was the night halts in damp and infectious dungeons, or on the hard soil, or in filthy stables. Nothing equals the horror of his description of the depot of La Tournelle, in Paris, where ‘the chain’ was provisionally stationed (until it was made complete).

“Louis de Marolles, a distinguished nobleman, a magistrate and king’s counsellor, a true and humble servant of Christ, tried to flee from

France at the Revocation, but was arrested near Strasbourg, taken to Châlons, and there sentenced, on March 9, 1686, 'to serve for life on the king's galleys.' The sentence was confirmed by the higher courts in Paris. The magistrates, pitying one of their own fraternity, tried to induce their prisoner to recant, or, at least, to consent to spend a few months under the tuition of the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, Bossuet, hoping that the honour of being catechized by the most illustrious bishop of France would win him. But he replied that no one could ever induce him to alter his convictions. . . .

"When all hope to convert him had to be given up, he was treated most rigorously. The governor of the Tournelle prison, where he was sent to await the departure of the 'chain,' had merely fettered him by the foot, but an express order from the king came, that the iron collar should be put round his neck. 'I am expecting from God's mercy,' he wrote to his sister-in-law, 'strength and constancy to suffer for His glory and for my salvation. Do not grieve on my account; I am happier than you think.' In a letter which he wrote at the same time to the Protestant minister, Jurieu, he thus concluded the account of his sufferings: 'This, sir, is the sum of my misery, or, to speak more truly, of my glory, for I give thanks to God every day for the honour He vouchsafes to me, not esteeming me unworthy to suffer for His Name's sake.'

"In another letter he wrote: 'I can tell you with sincerity that the prisons and dark cells which I have endured for more than six months, and the chain which I now wear round my neck, far from shaking the holy resolve which God has put into my heart, have only made it firmer. I have sought God, in this time of my sufferings, in a way very different than I did during my worldly prosperity, and I can say that He has permitted me to find Him.¹ He has agreeably communicated Himself to me by the sweetness of His consolations. In the midst of the transitory afflictions which I am undergoing by His good pleasure, He has caused me to taste the true and solid blessings. The ills I am threatened with do not frighten me: if they be violent, I shall not be able to bear them very long, and thus a Christian death will put a happy ending to them; and if they are bearable, I shall have occasion to bless God on that account, and He will continue His sweetness and benignity to me. . . .'

"When the chain was leaving Paris, a great many people went to see it start. Among them, 'new converts' might be seen, who, with eyes full of tears, looked on their suffering brethren,

¹ This seems to imply that, before he was a sufferer for Christ's sake, Marolles had been a true Huguenot with the fear of God in his heart, but without the full realization of His grace. In some cases, Huguenots have testified that their sufferings were the means of bringing them into complete assurance of salvation. —R. S.

who had been more faithful than themselves. 'A great many people of the Reformed faith,' says Marteilhe, 'stood in the streets through which the chain was passing, and in spite of our archers' rough rebukes, threw themselves upon us and embraced us. . . . These good people, of whom many were of distinction, shouted to us: Be of good courage, dear confessors of the truth; suffer with fortitude for so good a cause, while we, without ceasing, shall pray to God that He may give you grace to endure your hard sufferings, and other words to the same effect, most comforting to us.'

"The admirable constancy of Louis de Marolles brought even a Roman Catholic to embrace the faith which produced such heroism. Piercing through the crowd when the chain was leaving the prison, he came to him and hugged him, encouraging him and offering him his purse. A while after, the man gave glory to God, and emigrated to London with his family in order to profess the truth.

"As they walked through the cities, the *galériens* sometimes received alms from the passers-by. Jean Chapel, a lay-preacher, says: 'We were marched through the streets of Bordeaux to gather charities. My comrades sang litanies, but I sang Psalms, with full voice. The Jesuit priests who accompanied us forbade me instantly, but, nevertheless, I sang on. . . .'

"The old Baron de Montbeton (of an illustrious

family), sentenced in 1687, celebrated his convict's chain in verse :

“ ‘Some charitable ladies, he says, filled with sorrow as they saw me bound to ninety and nine convicts, were bathing my irons with their tears. To comfort them I said :

“How blessed is the chain
That binds me to my God !
There's no sorrow nor pain
But will at the Great Day
To sweet pleasure be changed.
O happy destiny
Which fulfills my desire !”¹

The ladies said to me : “How happy you are ! Your fetters do not seem heavy to you. We should like to share your happiness !””

“Thus,” says M. Lelièvre, from whose interesting book we have borrowed these facts, “did our fathers go to the galleys, singing and praising God under blows which made their backs sore. They were seen on the high roads of France wearing the red jacket of convicts and the cap of perpetual slavery, mixed with the lamentable procession of criminals whom society had ejected. By their solemn demeanour and the

¹ “Bénie soit la chaîne
Qui m'attache à mon Dieu.
Je n'ai douleur ni peine
Qui, dans le Sacré Lieu,
Ne soit un jour changée
En douceurs et plaisirs.
He reuse destinée,
Tu combles mes désirs !”

serenity of their looks, people recognized them at once, and said : 'These are the Huguenots!' which meant, in the mouths of some : 'These are the reprobates, worthy of all tortures,' but in the mouths of others : 'These are good people, martyrs for conscience' sake, and worthier than their persecutors.' That spectacle, renewed year after year for three-quarters of a century, finally raised up public indignation against a political régime and against a Church which were authors or accomplices of such infamous actions. The chain, tramping slowly through towns and country, exhibiting the good and the wicked bound together in such horrible promiscuity, hastened, probably, far more than the writings of the philosophers, that movement of minds and consciences which gave rise to the French Revolution."

Let us now turn to the Huguenot women.

About twenty miles from the city of Nîmes, three miles from the Mediterranean shore, stands the old town of Aigues-Mortes, so called on account of the unhealthy swamps which surrounded it up to recent times. The city was built under King Louis ix. (Saint Louis) in the thirteenth century. The King took ship from the neighbouring harbour when he went on his last crusade. But the walls of Aigues-Mortes have never seen fight or siege, and stand to-day just the same as they were in the days of chivalry, a perfect specimen of mediæval fortifications which

experts and artists come from great distances to study and to admire.

There, in a huge tower which bore the prophetic name of Tour de Constance, many holy women have been imprisoned. Marie Durand, the sister of a martyred minister, lived thirty-six years in this dungeon, and was set at liberty at last, in 1768, by the generosity of the Prince de Beauvau, governor of the province. When he came to inspect the prison, he was moved to pity by the sight of the poor women who had been so long buried alive under those dark vaults, and he ordered that they should all be at once released, without waiting for the king's permission, which, probably, would have been refused.¹

In the middle of the large circular room which was occupied by the Huguenot women—a room the walls of which are fifteen feet thick, and which is lighted only by narrow embrasures—there is, on the floor, an inscription which evidently was engraved on the hard stone by a weak and unpractised hand. The inscription is scarcely readable, and to see it one has to kneel down and to have a candle lighted, even if it be on a fine summer day. This inscription consists of a single word: *Résister* (Resist). It is supposed that one of the women carved it,

¹ The last execution of Protestant ministers took place in that same year, 1768, at Toulouse, just twenty-one years before the outbreak of the Revolution.

perhaps with a needle (the tracing is so faint), in order that her sisters might look at it after she was gone, and thus be strengthened in their resolve to endure.

Resist! Has not this motto of the holy Huguenot women become the password of our soldiers at Verdun to-day? Is it not fair to say that this one word expresses, more than any single one we might choose, the real soul of France?

CHAPTER VI

A GREAT SOUL: CLAUDE BROUSSON

IT is difficult to tear oneself away from those terrible times, and from the admirable souls who adorned the doctrines of the Gospel by their fidelity and patience in suffering.

I want to set up before my readers one of the finest characters that ever lived: a man who had in him the fire of an apostle, and a love for God which only the Holy Spirit could have produced; a man who worked only a few years, but, in that short time, may be said to have saved Evangelical Christianity in France; and, by so doing, though he never knew how great his work was, really saved France herself: Claude Brousson.

Claude Brousson was born in 1647, in the city of Nîmes, of godly parents, belonging to the middle-class. From early infancy God had given him devout feelings, and the love of His Word, which, he says, he read most carefully. After having finished good studies at Nîmes he passed the degree of Doctor at Law, and practised as a barrister before the *Cour mi-partie* of Castres. (The *mi-partie* courts were tribunals

instituted by the Edict of Nantes for the purpose of settling litigation between subjects belonging to the two religions; they were the only courts in which Protestant magistrates might sit.) From Castres, the court was removed, first to Castelnaudary, and finally to Toulouse. During his twenty years' practice, Brousson showed himself a disinterested friend of the poor, and a fearless defender of the Evangelical cause, which, year after year, was being assailed and undermined by the crafty policy of the King's ministers, until the final blow came.

Having come to see that all legal efforts to maintain the right of public worship for the Reformed were vain, Brousson and his friends resorted to audacious measures. Sixteen laymen — six of whom represented Languedoc, and ten the Cévennes, Vivarais and Dauphiné— assembled secretly at Toulouse, in Brousson's house. That city being then the most Catholic of France, they supposed rightly that their adversaries would never suspect them of such rashness. Brousson had only recently refused a councillor's seat in the Toulouse Parliament—a most distinguished and lucrative position—which had been offered to him if he would “conform.”

These sixteen men drew up a resolution which it is worth while to read. It shows the courage of the Huguenots, and also the depth of their spiritual life. It bears the date of May 1683.

“1. All the ‘faithful’ (this means all the

regular communicants) are exhorted to be converted sincerely to God; that is to say, they should manifest in future, purity, sobriety, modesty, humility, good faith, equity, love, piety and zeal for the glory of God.

"2. To this end, they shall diligently seek the help of the Holy Spirit . . . by reading and constant meditation of the Scriptures.

"3. The churches which have been interdicted (*i.e.* those that had been pronounced as unlawful by the Courts, under various pretexts) shall reassemble on June 27, and even before, if possible, to render to God worship and homage, to sing His praises, and to implore His mercy; to provoke one another to godliness, to receive Divine instruction, comforts and blessings; to celebrate the sacraments and to solemnize marriages.

"4. There shall be no demonstrations on the streets, no meetings on the ruins of our demolished church-buildings. The meetings will take place quietly in private houses (in those towns where the meeting-houses have been pulled down) or in gardens, woods and fields.

"5. If our meetings, be they as secret as possible, come to the notice of the King's court, be it known that we have been prompted by our zeal for the glory of God, and that our action corresponds with a respectful request which we shall send to the King, protesting that we are ready to suffer every thing so that we may render to our

great God the solemn worship which is due to Him. That request to be sent on the above-named day, June 27.

“6. On Sunday, July 4, all the churches shall, by God’s grace, keep a solemn fast.

“7. In places where there are no ministers, others shall be called from the neighbourhood ; and where none shall be available, the elders or deacons shall read the Word of God, prayers and sermons.”¹

Before they separated, the sixteen “Directors” wrote, as mentioned above, a request to the King, in which, with perfect moderation of tone, they firmly maintained that Protestants found themselves unable to reconcile his order with the Divine commands, and that, therefore, there was no alternative for them but to obey God rather than the King. “Our meetings, Sire, do not touch the fidelity which your suppliants owe to your Majesty ; they are ready to sacrifice their goods and their lives for your Majesty’s service. The same religion which compels them to assemble in order to glorify God, teaches them also that they can never free themselves, for any reason whatever, from that loyalty which is due to your Majesty by all his subjects. . . . If the poor people (meaning the Huguenots) are to be so unfortunate as to find no pity with their august monarch, for whom they will ever

¹ Haag, *France protestante*. There are other but less important articles in that Declaration.

entertain a sincere and respectful love, a marked veneration and an inviolable fidelity, they protest in the face of heaven and earth that, with the grace of God, in the interest of Whom they are exposing themselves to so many disgraces, they will continue to glorify Him in spite of the most terrible calamities."

Does not this language show forth the true heroism of faith?

These Huguenots were not Republicans, though their principles led (without their being well aware of it) to fullest political liberty. Their expressions jar with our modern language. But, dutiful subjects though they were, even to the point of exaggeration, one domain remained inviolate, even by the King, though they acknowledged him to be the master of their bodies. They were Radicals on that single question: soul liberty.

Claude Brousson was not an Oliver Cromwell; nor were the circumstances the same as in the case of the English Puritans. But we cannot believe that the stand which those "sixteen" took on behalf of God's rights, against the greatest potentate of their time, has been useless, nor that their intense love for their country and their passionate desire to see their nation led in the ways of righteousness, have availed nothing.

The resolution of the sixteen of Toulouse was partly carried out. In various places the Huguenots assembled peacefully, as prescribed;

at one of those meetings the local priest (*curé*) was present, and honestly declared to the bishop of Nîmes that "the minister had said nothing which he himself could not have been responsible for." But, in some parts, the Catholics took alarm, and had recourse to arms. The result was, in Dauphiné especially, a small civil war, in which Brousson took no part. Finally, he contrived to make his escape to Switzerland, where he heard that he had been condemned and even hanged in effigy on July 3, 1684. A number of executions of ministers and people followed, which, alas ! were not all in effigy.

At Lausanne, where he had settled with his wife and child, Brousson was internally eaten up by the love of God's cause in France. His time was spent, poor as he was, in writing letters on behalf of the suffering churches, addressed to their fellow-believers in other lands, and also letters to the Romish clergy, showing them the purity of the Reformed faith; these he sent by post to all the priests and bishops of France whose names he could procure. When, at last, the long-expected blow fell, he was appointed as a member of the Relief Committee which the foreign churches entrusted with the care of the Huguenot refugees ; he went in that capacity to Holland, in order to seek protection and support for his unfortunate brethren. That mission took him six months to fulfil, after which he returned to Lausanne, and there resumed his task of writing.

Seven thousand individual packets of letters were posted by him in the course of the years 1687 and 1688.

He also felt compelled to write to the French pastors who had sought a refuge in Protestant countries, admonishing them in rather severe terms to return to their perishing flocks. It is difficult for us who are enjoying full religious liberty to judge the motives of those Reformed ministers—by far the majority—who had emigrated. Had they remained, they would have had to face death every day, in districts often full of spies, and where hiding was well-nigh impossible. In some cases, too, the laity were not very anxious to retain among them a man whose presence under their roof, if discovered, would be sufficient to ruin them and to send them to perpetual slavery. The ministers, therefore, might find good excuses for having sought refuge in other lands. But, on the other hand, the first effects of the Revocation were somewhat abated after two or three years; the “new converts,” as they were called, had begun to look about them, and cautiously returned to their worship. Even in Paris there were Protestant meetings known and tolerated by the police for a while, at the back of a shop in Rue Monsieur le Prince. These facts, in Brousson’s view, made the ministers’ return more imperative.

“You should, my most honoured brethren,” he wrote, “consider whether your retirement is per-

fectly justified with regard to your flocks. It is true that, by suffering exile for the faith's sake, you have become confessors; in this you have shown that you are among the faithful ones who have left all for the Gospel. But as you are not only believers, but also pastors, you should consider whether you are fulfilling all the duties of your holy calling. . . . I am aware that nearly all who were committed to your care have renounced the truth. But you know, honoured brethren, that it is persecution, and the terror which it spread over their minds, which drew from their lips a recantation which was against their own hearts. . . . Now the storm is somewhat abated, and you may hear every day that God is calling out other preachers (lay preachers) to bring back the poor wandering sheep. . . . The very fact that our brethren are forbidden to leave France must induce you to see that the God whose Providence conducts everything, *will not have His candlestick removed from that Kingdom.* . . . The peril is great, but death is not absolutely inevitable. The danger was not smaller at the beginning of the Reformation, when, for the space of forty years, so many preachers were burnt alive. The good shepherd gives His life for his flock."

Yes, noble soul, you were right. God will not have His candlestick removed from this country.

A few ministers, touched by these entreaties, which a writer qualifies as being "tenderly pitiless," returned. But the larger number refused.

They had found shelter in Holland, England and elsewhere; in many cases they had been able to gather new flocks in those countries; no doubt many stayed behind with a good conscience, clearly convinced that God needed them where He had sent them. Still, all allowances being made, it remained a great pity that so many thousands of so-called "new converts" were not able to find, at the hour of their greatest spiritual need, the help which might have rescued them from their apostasy.

One of those who most keenly felt the sting of Brousson's remonstrances, finally apostrophized him: "Why do you not go yourself?" To which he meekly answered:

"I could wish that God had granted me, with the talent I have already received from His grace, the one which you yourselves have; for I should like to use them both. . . . I can assure you, my dear brethren, that I am in great perplexity. . . . May He make His will known to me."

Such a man as that could not hesitate very long: of the two paths opened before him, he was sure to choose the harder one. By frequent fasts and long seasons of prayer he prepared himself for his apostolate, and, leaving his family behind, he left Lausanne on July 22, 1689, for the Cévennes, where he safely arrived.

One of the first things he did was to draw up the "Confession of Faith of the Preachers of the Desert," which he sent to the King's Court, and

also to the clergy. He quietly went on visiting, preaching in secret and writing tracts. His study was sometimes a cave or a wood; he always carried with him a small wooden board, which he used as a writing-desk. We could quote from his writings, but enough has been given already to show the spirit of the man.

Yet this indefatigable worker was only a layman. As a lawyer, he was of good education, but he had never studied theology. According to the discipline of his Church, it would not have been right for him to administer the sacraments unless he was ordained; and so it was that, on a winter day of that year 1689, finding himself, with a few brethren, on the summit of one of the snow-clad mountains, in a small sheepfold which had been his retreat for a time, the brethren unanimously besought him to receive ordination, to preach to them and to give them the Lord's Supper. "Brother" Vivens, one of the few ordained ministers who had remained, joined with them in their entreaties. A few days later, on Christmas Day, Vivens ordained him.

Soon afterwards a real man-chase began. Henceforth Brousson was compelled to live in the woods and caves, scarcely daring to come out in open day. He often slept on straw, dunghills, faggots, under the trees, in bushes, in clefts of rocks, on the hard ground.

He found great peace in the communion of his God. . . . "But above all," he says, "one cannot

express all the comfort he has felt in the holy gatherings, especially when he was called upon to administer the Lord's Supper. Every time he realized a most remarkable experience: Notwithstanding the host of enemies who were waging a relentless war against him, as soon as he opened his mouth in the meetings to call upon the Name of the Lord, to sing His praise or to preach His Word, he was usually as peaceful in mind as if he had been in a land of liberty. He enjoyed the same quietude of spirit whenever he took up his pen for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God and the comfort of His desolate Church."

M. Lelièvre remarks that "during the memorable years of the first period of Brousson's ministry in France (1689-93), the awakening of the Cévennes and lower Languedoc had a character of earnestness and a spiritual depth which did not reach the same power during the years which followed. The influence of Brousson's firm and fervent piety explains that superiority. He impressed on the Huguenot soul his own sweet mystical devotion, and took away that rather dry intellectualism which marked the preaching of the seventeenth century."

This is how Brousson would proceed when he had to restore "apostates":

"When the sermon was over, the preacher asked whether there was any one among his hearers wishing to be reconciled to God and His Church, and to re-enter the communion of

saints. . . . Then, any who were so minded came forward and knelt before the preacher, who began to remonstrate with them and showed them how enormous was the sin they had committed in forsaking Christ. That being done, they were asked to say whether they did repent, and would henceforth live and die in the Reformed faith, in spite of the allurements and threats of the world; whether they heartily renounced the errors of the Church of Rome, the Mass and all thereto appertaining. . . . (This was done with much detail.) They had to answer Yes to all these questions, each individually. After this, they had to promise not to attend Mass any more, and to take great care not to pollute themselves with Babylon, either by marriage or in other ways; nor to allow their children to be trained in it, but, on the contrary, to instruct them in the principles of our religion. Each having duly promised, the minister then proclaimed the remission of their sins, saying: 'In the name and authority of Jesus Christ, and as a faithful minister of His Word, I declare to you the remission of all your sins, and that there is now no condemnation for you, since you are in Jesus Christ.' Then followed a prayer on their behalf."

"My soul," wrote a man to his children who had succeeded in escaping to foreign parts—"my soul is thrilled with joy and divine love, as I feel compelled to write to you of my happiness. The 6th inst. was the happy day of my conversion.

On that day I heard the voice of God through one of His ambassadors (Brousson), who explained to us these words: 'I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh' (Song of Sol. v. 2). Kneeling on the ground, but our souls rising up to Heaven, we heard, first, the Ten Commandments, then the Prayer for Confession of sins; and, in the same attitude, we sang with hushed voices the first part of the fifth Psalm, after which came the exposition of the Divine words I have quoted, and, lastly, our participation in the Holy Supper.

"Forty-two of us were admitted in that manner, the rest of the flock having been received back at previous gatherings. The number of communicants was about two hundred and fifty, men and women.

"Tell our former pastor, M. Modens, that nearly half of his flock are now restored, and by God's grace the rest will soon follow. The churches at Uzès, Nîmes, Sommières, etc., have all received the same blessing and are now restored. Our foes may say and do what they will, the Holy Spirit has had mercy on us and has reconquered our souls."

This interesting account shows that the revival which took place by the instrumentality of Claude Brousson was both extensive and genuinely spiritual. In spite of the persecutions, the larger Evangelical communities were fast being reorganized. The wholesale abjurations which had been

extorted from those poor people eight years before were now repented of. Even after this there were still many backsliders ; but the larger number remained faithful, and, as Brousson had predicted, "the candlestick was not entirely removed."

Relentlessly hunted down, often escaping his pursuers by the merest chance (humanly speaking)—having some of his friends from time to time captured and hanged—Claude Brousson, after four years of this strenuous life, felt the need of a little rest. His wife and son, whom he had not seen during all that time, had remained in Lausanne, where they lived in poverty. He returned to them, and joined them safely, in December 1693.

Keep the dates in mind. Just one hundred years afterwards, 1789, saw the fall of the Bastille, which put an end for ever to autocratic government and clerical tyranny, or, at least, to the worst forms of it ; 1793 saw the barbarous executions of nobles, priests, king and queen, by the fury of a rabble which could never have been so uncontrollable, if there had been in France, at that time, a larger number of men of Claude Brousson's character.

From Lausanne, Brousson and his family went to Holland, and thence to England ; but they did not long remain in Great Britain : he was called to The Hague to be one of the chaplains of the Court. This was one of the highest posts, and a

well remunerated one. The good servant might easily have believed that his Master, pitying his weariness—for Brousson was physically weak—gave him now an opportunity to recuperate, and allowed him to spend his last days in studious peace. Not so. The Divine appeal was ever ringing in his ears.

There are men whom God appoints to crosses and martyrdoms, and who, like Paul, mysteriously warned of it, feel a sort of holy impatience so long as they are not treading the thorny path which has been traced for them. Brousson was one of those men. Perhaps he felt out of place at the Dutch Court, and did not think himself qualified to preach before princes, though he certainly was eloquent. The call of the poor sheep whom he had left shepherdless haunted him. After four months of chaplaincy, he left wife and child once more, and re-entered France, in the middle of September 1695.

Brousson spent a whole year visiting the scattered remnant in the north and west of France. In Normandy he preached thirty-five times in a single month, and at two of those services, which usually lasted three hours, he received as many as four hundred communicants. Then he passed into Burgundy; but, detected and pursued, he just managed to escape to Switzerland, whence he returned to Holland.

A few months afterwards the holy pioneer, unable to restrain himself, started once more for

the land of peril (August 14, 1697). This time he parted from his beloved wife and son never to see them any more. The price on his head was raised : six hundred louis d'or (about five hundred pounds sterling) was to be paid to any one who might succeed in capturing him, or help to do so, dead or alive. Spies, militia, dragoons, all were set at his heels. He escaped almost miraculously a number of times. Finally, while hiding in Pau, he was betrayed, and they arrested him at Oloron, on the Spanish frontier, whither he had fled with his host when it had been discovered that a spy had denounced them.

Brought to Montpellier to be tried, Brousson appeared before his judges on November 4, 1698. He defended himself with great moderation. Then he knelt down and prayed for the judges, who were much moved ; but they could not disobey the King's orders, and they sentenced him to suffer death.

How the spots on which great scenes have been enacted take hold of our soul when we happen to visit them ! If ever the reader finds himself in the city of Montpellier, formerly so well known to English tourists, let him find his way to the Esplanade du Peyrou, a magnificent terrace which offers one of the grandest views to be seen anywhere, and let him say to himself : " Here, right in view of those Cévennes hills, where the testimony of Christ is still alive, thanks to the faithfulness of the Huguenot

martyrs,—here scores of them have been done to death, and Claude Brousson was the greatest of them.” Let the visitor then offer up a prayer on behalf of that city, where a number of true disciples of Christ are still keeping bright the lamp of the Gospel, and on behalf of France, where, you remember, Claude Brousson prophesied that the candlestick would never cease to shine.

Do you wish to know how this holy man went to his God?

The scaffold was surrounded by a crowd which was estimated at ten thousand people. As soon as Brousson appeared, drums began to beat, lest he should address the multitude. When he came to the scaffold, he knelt down and entrusted his soul to God. He was to be broken alive on the wheel; but Bâville, moved perhaps by a sort of respect for this “criminal” so much out of the common, had secretly given orders that he should be strangled first. The priest who accompanied him to the last tried even then to persuade him to die in the Catholic faith; but he replied with great meekness: “May God Almighty reward you, sir, for your great charity towards me, and grant that you and I together may see His face in Paradise.” These were his last words.

CHAPTER VII

THE JANSENISTS

THOUGH the name of Brousson has not become, as it deserved to be, a household name in France, yet the influence of that heroic man on the French soul was by no means a negligible quantity. It was to his short ministry, followed by that of Antoine Court, that the maintenance and revival of the Reformed faith in this country were mainly due. His life was full of "spirit and power."

Supposing Protestantism had entirely disappeared at the Revocation,—as it seemed only too likely it would,—what would the consequences have been?

We care not for a mere name, nor for lifeless traditions. A dead Protestantism might as well disappear, to make room for some new form of spiritual life. But it was made manifest, through Brousson's labours, and those of Antoine Court, Paul Rabaut and others, that the French Christians called Protestants were not all dead; and it has been made evident by subsequent history that the spiritual life and doctrine of these persecuted people was one of the most precious

assets of France's real wealth. For Protestantism stands for a Gospel addressed to all, and which all equally may understand and apply to themselves: it stands for the liberty of the soul, the equality of men before God and the universal fraternity of those whom Christ has redeemed. Even if we were only concerned with the interests of France as a temporal nation, still it would be right to affirm that the maintenance of Protestantism has been providential. Its influence has brought into being, or at all events has mightily helped, directly or indirectly, every social, moral and religious reform in France for the last two centuries.

In 1715, another man was raised up, Antoine Court, who, after the disorders of the Camisard War, and while persecution was still severe, applied himself with relentless energy to reorganizing the discipline and administration of the churches which Brousson had spiritually revived. The work of Antoine Court was beneficial, and it was called for; it prevented some excesses which might have caused the ruin of the churches; for in the absence of regular ministers, "prophetism" had been on the increase. This was a sort of illuminism, due partly to the state of mental excitement which the constant jeopardy of their lives created among the poor people. There had been, no doubt, cases of true prophetic gifts, but that which had been genuine had become a dangerous bias, or routine, and it was time some-

thing was done to stop it. It seems clear, however, that Antoine Court was somewhat too stringent. In his anxiety to restore discipline and order, he did not make a sufficient distinction between the absurdities of prophetism and the legitimate use of lay-preaching, which has done so much in England to advance the cause of Christ.

We must remember, however, that Antoine Court had been born under the reign of a king who was the very embodiment of etiquette, the monarch who built Versailles—cold, majestic, unnatural Versailles, with its rigid symmetry, its gardens all straight and square, the very trees themselves being forced to grow according to an artificial fashion. This worship of the stately and classical appears in all the works of the time: in art, literature, religion. The Court, living away from Paris, in the sumptuous palace lavishly built to the glory of the great king, ceased to speak the language of the people, and an elegant French took its place—so that, even to the present day, the polite, literary language is very different from that of everyday life. From Bossuet down, the sermons of that time lack simplicity, if they do not want in grandeur. The great refugee preacher, Saurin, who filled for many years the largest church at The Hague, was no exception to the rule; down to the humblest of the Wilderness preachers, all seemed to have caught the disease. Every one at that time seems to have worn a powdered wig and to have

walked on stilts. It needed the Revolution to break down this unnaturalness; and it needed a new revival—as we shall presently see—to introduce a spirit of greater simplicity into French Protestant preaching.

The great, abiding work of Antoine Court was the restoration of the Synods, or General Assemblies, and the foundation, at Lausanne, of a Theological Seminary, which sent year after year new ministers to “the Churches under the Cross,” as they called themselves. That school existed until the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was transferred to Montauban, its present locale. “Strange school of death,” says Michelet, “which relentlessly sent out new martyrs and fed the scaffold.”

While the Reformed Christians were either in exile or compelled to hide themselves in the fastnesses and solitudes of the mountains, the Spirit of God was at work among the Catholics themselves, and the cardinal truths of the Gospel were being brought to light by men who abhorred the name of Huguenots, and yet had unconsciously imbibed their distinctive doctrines. We are referring to that great spiritual movement which is known in history as *Jansenism*.

Jansénius, a learned and godly doctor of the Louvain University, became bishop of Ypres in the early part of the seventeenth century. Ypres, Louvain, how those names sound strangely to-day! What has become, under the barbarians' shells, of

the quiet retreats where the good bishop wrote his famous book, *Augustinus*? In that book, which he wrote in co-operation with the not less celebrated Abbé de Saint-Cyran, Jansénius vigorously defended, against the Jesuit doctors, what are known as the Doctrines of Grace, as they were expounded by the great Father of the fifth century, St. Augustine. Calvin had done the same less than a century before; indeed, it may be said that Calvinism is identified with those doctrines, which were very strictly professed by the Reformed in Holland. Though Jansénius stoutly contended that he was free from "the errors of Calvin," it is hard to see where the difference lies, especially on the doctrine of Predestination.

Jansénius' book, which was a huge work, would probably have passed unobserved by the general public, as it was abstruse and written in Latin. But it found excellent expositors, or rather translators and defenders, in the persons, first, of Saint-Cyran, who had contributed to its making, and who was a man of great spiritual insight and power, and a real disciple of Jesus Christ, notwithstanding his exaggerated austerity and his severity towards his penitents; then, of the remarkable family of the Arnaulds, men and women. One of them was called the "grand" Arnauld, on account of his rare qualities as debater, of his tremendous energy, and of his still greater prolixity as a writer. . . . The Arnaulds

had Huguenot blood in their veins ; their grandfather had only escaped the massacre of St. Bartholomew by the protection of Queen Catherine de Médicis, who had a special regard for him. This Huguenot descent goes far to explain the stubbornness of that family against their opponents, soon become their persecutors.

Associated with the Arnauld family by marriage ties, there was another family, the Le Maître, also of Huguenot descent. One of them, Le Maître de Sacy,¹ became the translator of the Bible—a translation which, till a few years ago, was the most accurate of Catholic versions, and is the only one that the British and Foreign Bible Society have felt justified in issuing for the use of such Catholics as are prejudiced against Protestant versions.

Jansénius died before the dispute began, but it was carried on by the above-named writers. The contention between the Jesuits and the Jansenists was mainly on a point of great importance. The Jesuits, by three of their most influential doctors, had formulated an easy sort of doctrine which, in the judgment of their opponents, greatly tended to materialize religion : they maintained “ that the more one is deprived of grace, the more one should boldly approach Christ in the Eucharist ; and that those who are full of self and much attached to the world, do well to communicate frequently.” Arnauld maintained, on the con-

¹ Sacy is an anagram of Isaac.

trary, "by the authority of the Fathers and of tradition" (but why not by that of the Scriptures alone?), "that an internal conversion should take place before the external; that true repentance must be required from the sinner before admitting him to confession; a contrite heart, with love to God, before absolution should be given him; and that true penitence should be practised and fulfilled before he was admitted to communion. . . . That it was a sacrilege to seek in the sacraments a superstitious, a ceremonial, and, as it were, a mechanical remedy, without having first made some real advance in spiritual health." This—but for the Fathers and tradition being invoked rather than the Scriptures—was truly Protestant doctrine. Jansenism was an attempt to eradicate superstition and formalism, and to bring back spirituality into the Church. This noble movement was doomed to fail, for a Church that must at all costs keep the multitudes within her pale, must for that reason connive more or less with the formalism and externalism which is the only religion the masses are willing to profess. But it was a great thing to dare to oppose the Jesuits, when the king sided with them, as did also the highest ecclesiastical authorities, including the Pope himself.

In spite of the protests of the Jansenists, who, the more they opposed the Jesuits the more they wanted to affirm their Catholic orthodoxy, Jansenism was a sort of compromise between

Romanism and Protestantism, and had more of the latter than of the former. It was Catholic by its belief in the Real Presence and in the Sacraments. "It maintained, in spite of the Holy See itself,¹ the pretension of remaining faithful to Rome and to the central Church. For that reason it needed St. Augustine, a Father and a doctor nearer to us than St. Paul. That is what I call the cannon-ball which Jansenism dragged along, and to which it was chained from its origin. It lost all its force of rapidity and youth. . . . Please think of this : the Methodist missionary goes out with his Bible, with the Gospel and Epistles ; he needs nothing more to stir him. The Jesuit missionary goes out with his breviary ; he needs nothing more to keep himself up and to prompt him to prayer ; the care of settling dogmas and all theological discussions and definitions he refers to Rome ; he does not constantly burden himself with it. But the Jansenist, who is a Biblical Christian while he styles himself a Catholic, who believes in St. Paul but needs to have him demonstrated by a Doctor of Divinity or by one of the Fathers in order to prove to the other Catholics that he has the true tradition, the Jansenist finds himself burdened and checked at every point. There-

¹ The above is extracted from the great standard work of Sainte-Beuve, *Port Royal*. Sainte-Beuve, a Catholic, writes as the Catholics do : "Methodists" with him means Protestant propagandists of all denominations. "The Bible" means the Old Testament only.

fore, what Methodism under its various forms in England, America, Switzerland, etc., has been and is still, Jansenism could never have become. Too many fetters hindered it. It never was but half emancipated at home; it could not go very far. It had to carry with it all St. Augustine along with St. Paul: that was too heavy a burden."

How clear this statement of the great critic, who lacked nothing, it seems, but a keen conscience, to become a disciple of Christ! These words of his apply to many religious schools besides the Jansenist.

There was, however, one great redeeming point in Jansenism, one which causes us to love it with intense sympathy. It proclaimed free grace, justification by faith, and by faith in Christ alone. This accounts for the readiness with which it was received at first, mainly by the upper class, or rather by the thoughtful and learned people of its time. It was the means of numerous and thorough conversions—some of the most noticeable being those of the daughters of Arnould, and of the nuns of the Port-Royal monastery, the abbess of which, "Mother Angélique," was one of those gifted daughters.

But the most remarkable of those changed lives, the most illustrious convert of Jansenism, was a man who stood—though unconsciously to him—among the men of genius then so numerous in France, as a king among his courtiers; the

man who, perhaps, deserves the very first place among Frenchmen of all times : Blaise Pascal, the great mathematician, writer and philosopher ; Pascal, who wrote the famous *Provinciales*, the strongest indictment against Jesuit casuistry that was ever written, and has made it impossible for Jesuits ever to be popular in France, the very name having become obnoxious to a degree which can hardly be realized ; and who also wrote *les Pensées* (Thoughts), a unique book of Christian apologetics, which speaks to-day to mind and heart as clearly and finally as in the day when it first appeared.

Jansénius, Saint-Cyran, Pascal, Arnauld, Le Maître, Hamon, Quesnel, these men, leaders of many souls, took hold of Christ in a way that fills the heart with gratitude and wonder. They lived in the hope that the Church of Rome would recognize them as her true sons, and break away from the Jesuits. Adverse to schism, they flattered themselves to the last with the illusion that they were in full accord with the true mind of the Roman See ; that the Popes who, one after the other, condemned them, had been misinformed. They, however, had from time to time glimpses of the real state of the case. Thus Saint-Cyran, speaking of the *Court* of Rome, which, in his mind, he tried to separate from the *Church* of Rome (all the Reformers at first have entertained the same illusion, down to our own times) : “ They go too far,” said he, “ we shall have to show them their

duty." His biographer, himself a Jansenist, says that those words were spoken out of zeal for the truth, and by a certain internal prompting which seemed to come from God Himself. And he adds: "By this, one is able to judge of what he would have done had he seen the sequel."

But he did not, nor did Pascal. They both died as dutiful Catholics; but had they lived a few years more, there is reason to believe that a new secession from Rome would have taken place under their leadership. Pascal, after publishing his first Provincial Letters, wrote these ominous words: "If my letters are condemned in Rome, what I have condemned in them (meaning the Jesuits' casuistry and their semi-Pelagianism) is condemned in heaven: 'Ad tuum, Domine Jesu, tribunal appello' (At Thy tribunal, Lord Jesus, I appeal)." Men who speak thus may think themselves what they like; they are protesters, and practically outside the Romish pale.

The great weakness of the Jansenist party, besides its almost sickly fear of schism, was its lack of sympathy with the common people; not that it was deficient in charity, but it was slow to adapt itself to the mentality of the masses. The Jansenists were wonderful controversialists, but few of them had the evangelistic spirit. The great Arnauld wrote so many polemical books, that there is probably no man alive (and perhaps there never was one) who has read them all.

But among these books there is not one meant for the peasants or the working-men. Saint-Cyran's *Spiritual Letters* are very good reading, but only for the educated. Heavy and ponderous, such are the general characteristics of the writings to which Port-Royal has given its name, as it was under the shadow of the ancient monastery that the good and learned men wrote and prayed. The one great exception to the heaviness of those writers—but what a brilliant one!—was Pascal.¹

The Jansenists loved God, Christ, the Church, their fellow-men; but their extreme views on Predestination inclined them to seek the secluded life more than the missionary's career. Here is a case in point.

One of their most distinguished converts was M. Antoine Le Maître, eldest of a remarkable family. Antoine Le Maître was the most famous barrister of his time. His eloquence made any

¹ Another exception was Jean Racine, who is considered by some as the greatest of French poets. He was certainly, after Corneille, the greatest writer of tragedies. After his conversion, which was the fruit of his Jansenist education, he gave up theatrical work altogether, and confined himself to religious poetry. Some of his hymns are found to-day in our Protestant collections, with some by Pierre Corneille. He was induced, however, by Madame de Maintenon's entreaties, to write two plays taken from Scripture: *Esther* and *Athalie*. These are considered the finest of his works, and are the only plays on the French stage which are entirely free from any love plot. They were composed for the use of young ladies of noble birth—many of them daughters of Protestant families—for whom Madame de Maintenon had founded the Institute of Saint-Cyr.

case appear interesting, and he seldom lost one. When he was announced to speak at the Bar, the preachers themselves, if they had sermons to preach at the same hour, would postpone the service, for they well knew that most of their ordinary hearers would desert them to go to the court.

Antoine Le Maître was converted at the age of twenty-eight, mainly by the instrumentality of Saint-Cyran. At the request of his spiritual adviser, he continued in his avocation for a few months, notwithstanding his thirst for silence and seclusion. But his court pleadings were lifeless ; he did not put heart in them any more. He says that, while addressing the Court, he often looked at the crucifix above the judge's seat, and felt intensely how empty was his oratorical fame, how nothing mattered except the love of Christ. As soon as Saint-Cyran permitted him to do so, he retired to a small house, which his devoted mother had built on purpose for him, for his brother and for two or three other *solitaires*, near the monastery of Port-Royal, Paris. There he devoted his whole time—though a layman, and too humble to seek Holy Orders—to prayer, penance, study of the Scriptures and of the Fathers, and sometimes writing. The genuineness and thoroughness of his conversion cannot be controverted ; but one feels a great pity that such a wonderful gift of speech should have been entirely sacrificed, while the masses of Paris and

of France were starving for want of the pure Gospel. Le Maître died in 1658, leaving behind him the sweet perfume of a truly consecrated life.

In one thing, at least, the Jansenists were not deficient. They took great care of the education of the young, and founded schools which were unequalled for the moral tone of the teachers. It was as pupil in one of these schools that Jean Racine received the impressions which years afterwards were the means of leading him to a really consecrated life.

We have only touched on the history of Jansenism. A whole chapter might be profitably devoted to a description of Port-Royal, with its two houses, one in Paris and one in the country, near Versailles (it was called Port-Royal des Champs), where a number of truly Christian women, led by the celebrated Mère Angélique, daughter of the great Arnauld, and by Jacqueline Pascal, sister of the Christian philosopher, prayed and fought spiritual battles, endured persecution for what they believed to be the truth, till their houses were confiscated or destroyed by order of the king. The motto of Angélique Arnauld describes the Jansenists' doctrine and spirit more than many words could: "*Mourir à tout, s'attendre à tout*" (Die to everything, be ready for anything).

Jansenism has been defeated by persecution. There are few Jansenists left to-day: the Archbishop of Utrecht is considered at the head of

what remains of it, and a few priests are still ordained by him from time to time. But if, as a party, they have failed to bring about a reformation of the Church, their spirit is still alive. Rome has become more and more Ultramontane, and is bound by her very principle to remain so. But the movements which we have been trying to describe, all too briefly, have left such a mark on the French soul, that come what may, it will never be possible for Jesuitism to rule France.

Before we take leave of the Jansenists, let us return to Blaise Pascal. We should like to give our readers an idea of what he was, by trying—most difficult thing—to translate a short page of his writings—his confession of faith :

“ I love poverty, because He loved it. I love possessions, because they procure the means wherewith to assist the miserable. I keep faith with every one. I do not return evil to those who do evil to me ; but I wish them such a condition as mine, when one does not receive from men either evil or good. I try to be just, truthful, sincere and faithful towards all, and I have a tenderness of heart for those whom God has joined to me more intimately ; and whether I am alone or in the view of all men, I do all my actions in the sight of God who shall judge them, and to whom I have devoted them all.

“ Such are my sentiments, and I bless every day of my life my Redeemer Who has put them into me, and Who, of a man full of weaknesses,

miseries, covetousness, pride and ambition, has made a man free from all those evils by the strength of His grace, to which all glory is due on that account, as of me there is nothing but wretchedness and error.”¹

Pascal was of poor health all his life, and no doubt increased his infirmities by the austerities to which he addicted himself, not so much to earn merit, as to enjoy closer fellowship, as he thought, with the sufferings of Christ. He died at the early age of thirty-nine, in the full peace of God.

It is not too much to say that the influence of his writings has been immeasurable. It checked the progress of Jesuitism, and developed in the thoughts and consciences of many men and women an element of spirituality which, though not altogether absent before him, was in great danger of disappearing altogether under the flood of materialistic legends and devotions. He was the layman's theologian, and satisfied to a great extent that intense craving for a religion at once mystical and rational which is peculiar, perhaps, to the French mind. He counteracted to a large extent the baneful effects that the infidelity of Voltaire and his associates was to produce in the following century.

Reader, whenever you come to Paris again, rest yourself for a while in the garden that sur-

¹ See, in Appendix B, some *Thoughts* of Pascal which we have tried to render into English.

rounds the Tour St. Jacques, that beautiful mediæval tower, standing in the centre of the city, which is all that is left of Pascal's parish church. There, in the shadow of the arch, you will see the statue of a man whose action upon the soul of France has been very great. His Church has not made a saint of him : he was too independent of her to obtain canonization. But he was a true saint, and one of the score of holy men whose genius and example belong to all Christendom : Blaise Pascal.

CHAPTER VIII

THE GALLICANS

WE have, so far, admired many beautiful characters, men and women whose influence on the soul of France has been elevating and ennobling: saints of the Middle Ages, reformers and martyrs, Jansenists, all have a right to our gratitude, inasmuch as, notwithstanding many errors and the narrowness of their views on some points, they stood for the same cause, the rights of the human soul, and of the truth as revealed in Scripture.

It must not be overlooked, however, that the Church from which they dissented was the Gallican Church, *i.e.* the Catholic Church of France—a Church very different in some respects from the Ultramontane, or Roman Catholic Church. The Gallican Church was, of course, only a part of the system of which the Pope was, and is, the recognized head; but it never ceased to maintain that the Bishop of Rome was only *primus inter pares*, the first among his peers, and that he had no authority apart from the œcumenical councils. The dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope, promulgated by the Vatican

Council in 1870, has put an end to the Gallican Church. As a Gallican writer says: it has been the starting-point of a new religion which the old Church of France knew not.

Erroneous systems live only by the amount of truth contained in them. The presence of one true principle in a false creed, or of a good man on the side of a wrong cause, helps to keep that creed and that cause alive.

It is admitted by nearly all historians that one of the effects of the Reformation was to compel the Catholic Church to an internal reform. The Council of Trent worked a change for the better, if not in the doctrines, at least in the morals and discipline of the clergy. Nowhere was this change more marked than in France.

For instance, in the writings of François de Sales, the greatest enemy of Protestant Geneva, there are précieux grains of Gospel wheat. He had a sense of the Divine realities, and was, with all his intolerance, a true disciple of Christ. Rome made a saint of him, as of his associate, Madame de Chantal, founder of the Augustine Sisterhood.

Another man living in that period, and who also has been canonized, deserves more than a passing mention, for his action on the people has been, and is still, very great: Vincent de Paul. Born in 1576, he died in 1660. His long life was spent in evangelistic and charitable work; he was the founder of many beneficent institutions

which are still in existence, and which have done more than can be imagined for the maintenance of religion in this country.

Vincent de Paul, as a young priest, went on some missionary errand in the course of which he was captured by a Mahommedan pirate, and sold as a slave in Algiers. His master was an Italian renegade. Vincent undertook to bring him back to Christianity, and he succeeded; both, seeking their safety in flight, managed to reach the coasts of France.

The motto of Vincent de Paul was: "Rien ne me plaît qu'en Jésus-Christ" (Nothing pleases me but in Jesus Christ). Beautiful words, which all the "heretics" we have named would most willingly have adopted! How is it that men whose only passion was Christ—Pascal and the Jansenists, Brousson and the persecuted Huguenots, Vincent de Paul and his Catholic associates—all of good faith and men of prayer, should have lived and died so far apart from one another?

Vincent de Paul founded an order of popular mission-preachers, called the Lazarists, an institution which helped mightily to maintain the common people under the rule of the Church, but also supplied a frightful need for the people in the villages specially. To him also is due the foundation of the order of the *Sœurs de Charité* (Sisters of Mercy), an order very different from most, in that its members do not take perpetual vows, but only annual ones. The order was created

for the purpose of assisting the poor, the aged and the foundlings, for whom, till Vincent de Paul took pity on them, no provision had been made. Though there has been, and there is still, much bigotry connected with these institutions, they have done good, by illustrating the practical character of Christianity. "The daughters of St. Vincent," as they are sometimes called, or "the Little Grey Sisters," are the most popular representatives of the Church among the people; they are never scoffed at, even by the most advanced free-thinkers, and they are winning new laurels to themselves and to their founder in the Hospitals and at the Front to-day.

We must also mention a good priest who, in those days, was the nearest approach to a revival preacher that Rome has probably ever produced. His name was Father Bridaine (1701-67). Gifted with wonderful, though rough, eloquence, he seems to have been burning with a true love for souls. He preached no less than two hundred and fifty-six missions throughout all parts of France except the north: a mission would, I suppose, last two or three weeks at least. Wherever he went, crowds pressed round him, though his preaching was most terrifying. His principal subjects were, the Danger of delaying Conversion; the Death of the Impenitent; Heaven and Hell; his picture of the doom that awaits the wicked greatly affected his hearers everywhere. In a century of moral decadence, he was a sort of John the

Baptist. The Court came to hear him, at the Lent season, in the church of Saint-Sulpice, Paris. One of the sermons he preached on that occasion remains in French literature as a classic, a model of impassioned and rugged eloquence.

There are two or three other names to be mentioned, names of men of greater prestige, and whom it would be impossible to ignore in a review of the spiritual forces which have made the soul of France what it is.

Bossuet (born in Dijon, 1627, died in Paris, 1704) was probably the most eloquent Frenchman who ever lived; and that is saying much, for eloquence has ever been a common gift in this country. As a young priest he "preached a mission" at Metz, where Protestants abounded, and this led him to study Reformed doctrine, which he assailed on many occasions, though, no doubt, it helped to make him the strong Gallican he was. For ten years preceptor of the Dauphin (the king's eldest son), he wrote for his instruction several religious works. He became Bishop of Meaux, and his eloquence won for him the glorious surname of the Eagle of Meaux.

Bossuet's preaching was essentially doctrinal. He used to say that, if people believed the truth, they would live well. The true life, in his view, was the fruit of the true faith. He preached before the king numberless times, and on such occasions delivered his great funeral orations on

princes, princesses and great men of the time. His preaching was orthodox, and not very much burdened with Roman peculiarities: one finds little in his sermons concerning purgatory, or Mary, or the saints. The Cross is there, but somewhat veiled by the sacramental idea and the doctrine of merit.

But Bossuet's beneficial action on his time was his resistance to the encroachments of the Pope on the liberties of the Gallican Church. Indeed, the views of Bossuet and the French bishops, who in majority sided with him in the assembly of 1682, where the celebrated Gallican Declaration was voted, were not very widely different from those of the extreme English High Church of to-day. The Declaration emphasized three main points:

1. The temporal independence of the kings in regard to the Holy See.

2. The final authority remaining with the Church, expressing herself in a General Council; not with the Pope, who has no personal infallibility.

3. The Pope, while he is the first bishop of Christendom, is essentially the equal of the other bishops, who are, as well as he, the direct successors of the apostles.

These points—and the staunch opposition of Bossuet to the Jesuits and their casuistry—a point on which he thoroughly agreed with Pascal and the Jansenists—constituted a sort of Catholi-

cism very different from that of to-day. Were Bossuet living in our time, and did he maintain the views which he so powerfully advocated, he would certainly incur excommunication. To deny the Pope's infallibility and to invest the supreme authority in the Councils, was to be, in principle, a Dissenter, though Bossuet would have shuddered at the very idea. He wrote a clever book on *The Variations of Protestantism*; but what book would he write to-day on the variations of Rome, if he had lived to see them?

The worship of external unity has been, and is still, one of the chief obstacles, if not the chiefest, to the spiritual enfranchisement of many earnest souls, who, while they cannot help perceiving that the teachings and practices of the Church are not in accord with the Scriptures, consider it as the sin of sins to break the unity of what is still, in their belief, the true body of Christ. This trait is found everywhere, more or less, where Rome has held her sway; but it is a very peculiar feature of what is called, perhaps inaccurately, the "Latin" races. The nations which arose after the fall of the Roman Empire, and whose laws are based upon the Roman, have a tendency to excessive centralization, which leads to despotism and to the annihilation of the individual. Nonconformity is the worse form of sin for those who have been bred in that spirit. The Church's doctrine in the matter of schism is, that no one, having been baptized, has any

right to sever himself from the Church. For, according to that view, there is only one baptism, as there is only one Church: the heretic, therefore, is, in virtue of his baptism, a member of the Church—he cannot renounce that quality, do what he may. But as he is a wayward member, the Church's duty is to bring him back by all possible means, even, if needs be, by corporal punishment. Her very love for her stray children compels the Church to chastise them, even unto death!

It must be said, however, on behalf of Bossuet, that he never ceased to plead for moderation and patience towards the erring Protestants.¹

Fénelon, the Swan of Cambrai, was also one of the leading characters of that wonderful seventeenth century, which has been, for France at least, the religious century *par excellence*. He also had charge of a Royal child, the Duc de Bourgogne, who, like his father, the Dauphin, died before the old king. Louis XIV., great ravisher of other people's children, was heavily visited by death in his offspring; and it seems that France lost much in the death of the young prince, who had shown himself to be worthy of the crown.

Fénelon's poetical and mystical turn of mind led him very far; almost to the point of becoming

¹ We can only mention the public discussion which Bossuet held with the celebrated minister of Charenton, Jean Claude, a man of extraordinary power as a debater,—a discussion which, as usual, was claimed as a victory by both sides.

a heretic by sharing the views of Madame Guyon, that strange woman whom it is so difficult to analyse ; a woman who, while a sincere lover of Christ, wrote of the Divine mysteries more in the style of human passion than of chastened and spiritual devotion. It is to the credit of Bossuet that he firmly opposed Madame Guyon's dangerous "Quietism," and compelled Fénelon to withdraw his support from these doctrines, though his retractation was reluctant, and not quite sincere. Strange to say, Fénelon, though a mystic, approved heartily of the Revocation.

The other eminent preachers of that period, which was so fertile in religious gifts, were Massillon, Bourdaloue, Fléchier. Their tone was lofty ; the matter of their sermons was spiritual and, as we noticed in the case of Bossuet, strangely free from distinctive Romish doctrines. That conversions resulted from their preaching is not surprising, though those conversions could never develop into the full assurance of faith and salvation which follows the preaching of the pure Gospel.

These great preachers have, more or less, influenced the French Catholic pulpit to this day. The preaching of such men as Lacordaire, Gratry, Hyacinthe (before he left Rome), Perraud, Didon, free from the superstitions of Lourdes, la Salette and the Sacred Heart, which have so materialized the Catholic Church in our time, was a modern echo of the seventeenth-century preachers, and a

proof that the Reformation had powerfully influenced the very Church that persecuted it.

For we have no hesitation in ascribing to this cause the elevation of the Catholic pulpit in those days and afterwards (at least in the case of the men we have named—though we must not forget that there were, at the same time, innumerable friars and ignorant priests whose teaching was very different from that of those men). Gallicanism, in fact, was an attempt to defeat the “heretics” by using their own weapons, and it resulted in preventing, to a large degree, French Roman Catholicism from becoming a religion of mere superstitions, as it was in Spain and Italy, and as it would fast become in France at present were the baneful influence of Ultramontaniam to be unchecked.

CHAPTER IX

SOME OF THE GREAT WRITERS WHO SHAPED THE SOUL OF FRANCE (SEVENTEENTH AND EIGHTEENTH CENTURIES)

WHILE great preachers filled the Royal chapel of Versailles and the cathedrals of France with their eloquence, which, however, did not check the declension of morals at Court or in the upper classes, what was the spiritual state of the people?

The proscription of hundreds of thousands of the best Frenchmen was even then taking place, while other thousands had been compelled to a sullen acceptance of a creed which they secretly abhorred. The Jansenists were also, and at the same time, being persecuted, though not so cruelly as the Huguenots. Such object-lessons could not but have a baneful influence on the common people. The sight of so many noblemen and ladies abjectly giving up their faith in order to retain their titles, their lands and the king's favour; the ease with which some did it, and the connivance of the Church at their hypocrisy—all this must have been very effective in breeding

scepticism among the working classes. What can be the value of a religion when it can be bartered away so easily for mere temporal advantages?

Of course, the natural heart of man found its satisfaction in this. The masses are ever pagan, even in the most enlightened countries, and it does not need much effort to induce them to put off the restraints of religion. In the seventeenth century, infidelity could not openly show itself; but the spirit of Montaigne and Rabelais still existed. Molière brought the narrow and hypocritical bigotry of his time before the footlights, in his celebrated *Tartufe*, the impersonification of jesuitical craftiness. All Paris laughed, and so did the king himself, though it was not without difficulty and emendations that Molière succeeded in bringing out his play, which was the protest of common sense and honesty against the travesty of religion.

But the man who may be considered as the mouthpiece and true representative of the people of France at that time, and perhaps for all times since, was Jean de Lafontaine.

Lafontaine was no polemist. A careless, selfish, good-natured poet, he was temperate in all things, even in the gratification of his weaknesses, which he did not take the trouble to conceal. Conforming outwardly to the religious and social customs, he had really little concern for anything or any one in this world or out of it,

He was, in a word, an epicure. Some of his writings had a decidedly immoral character ; but his fame has been established by his *Fables*, which he wrote when he was over forty-five years of age.

It may astonish the reader to learn that, for two centuries and more, those *Fables* have been the most popular book in French literature, the chief mental food of the French people. During the nineteenth century, and even now, every child at school has learned by heart some of the *Fables de Lafontaine*. What the stories of the Bible have been for English children, these have been for ours. And there are few writings that have done so much quietly to destroy—as far as it might be—the respect for official authority as this little collection of fables has done.

Each of the *Fables* is a masterpiece in itself ; a miniature, most carefully drawn, in which the figures are, really, men disguised as animals. The Lion, the Wolf and the Fox, the Deer, the Hare and the Rabbit, the Raven, the Stork and the Cicada, and many others, are the personages of this never-ending comedy, and every one of them is but the type of some human character. It is impossible to render in any foreign language these little poems, the composition of which required an immense amount of work—though they run so easily. Their subtle philosophy is wholly pagan. The real king of the *Fables* is not the Lion, neither is it the Lamb—you may be

sure that Lafontaine never dreamed that the Lamb should be the king. It is the Fox.

Lafontaine touches every problem without going deeply into any; he is a veiled cynic, and nothing ruffles him. He has for the Fox's villainies nothing but a smile and a shrug of the shoulders; he never laughs very loud, and he never weeps. The morality of those Fables may be summed up in few words: "Let us save ourselves from trouble and worry by all means, except by downright rascality." The higher words of the human language, Immortality, Purity, Heroism, Self-Sacrifice, are not even implied in the Fables. Lafontaine does not deny spiritual values, he simply ignores them. The résumé of Lafontaine's wisdom is, worship of self; a worship without pomp, but nevertheless a worship.

How is it that a nation whose temperament is essentially heroic, where devotion to the higher interests has had such, and so many, noble representatives—how is it that France has taken such a fancy for Lafontaine? The only reply can be this: the common people saw in the Fables a protest against the arbitrariness of the government, against the official hypocrisy of the Court; a protest—a very mild one—against the sophisticated splendours of Versailles, which were tainted with the blood of a nation; a call to a more simple way of living, in the name of nature and common sense. There was great need of such a call. It would be hard to exaggerate the harm—

both moral and social—caused by the excessive centralization of our national life around the person of the monarch, living in a stately palace away from his capital, the rumours of which never reached him. The two long reigns of Louis xiv. and Louis xv., covering together a period of one hundred and thirty-one years (1643–1774), destroyed the old provincial liberties as well as the religious ones, turning France into a lean body with a tremendously big head; giving to the people a false notion of living, and the scandalous example of immorality enthroned. The Fables of Lafontaine were the first and almost imperceptible breath of that revolutionary storm which was inevitable, and which, blind as it was in some of its manifestations, was on the whole salutary.

In the impossibility, at the time when Lafontaine was living, of dissenting openly from the king in matters of religion and politics, the nation took the only way which remained open to her, unless she consented to a complete suicide—the way that Lafontaine had selected: anger was impotent, tears were useless; there was, therefore, no alternative but to smile. The smile was a sort of compromise, a supreme manifestation of independence, from a nation that might be forced to comply with her tyrant's fancies, but wanted to show that she was not, after all, imposed upon.

Lafontaine redeemed his somewhat disgraceful

life by the courageous stand he took on the side of his benefactor, Fouquet. He seems to have turned to God in genuine repentance two years before his death, which occurred in 1695.

Just a year before, a child was born who was to become the greatest scourge that ever befell Roman Catholicism in France, and perhaps in the whole world: Voltaire. What was the smile of Lafontaine compared with the terrible laughter which was to follow it—a laughter which shook the very foundations of the old world, pulled down, with a crash, a number of crumbling edifices, even the Royal throne itself, and threatened, as it seemed, the very existence of Christianity?

Voltaire and his friends (for such a man could not be an isolated unit) were the inevitable products of all that had gone before, and which we have tried to sketch faithfully. A political and religious system which had put a premium on hypocrisy could only foster, in a country naturally given to outspokenness, and whose very name suggests frankness,—a tremendous revolt in which, as in all similar movements, the good and the bad would be, for a time, swept away together. When Voltaire uttered his blasphemous cry: “Ecrasons l’infâme!” (Let us crush the infamous one!), he was not, probably, singling out the Romish Church, but aiming at every form of revealed religion. At the same time it must be remembered that he had received his education at a Jesuit college, and that he had breathed, in

his early days, the polluted atmosphere of the Régence. Voltaire, in his young days, was exiled for a small offence, and spent three years in England. But England was then at its lowest ebb, morally and religiously. There he formed acquaintance with Locke, Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Chesterfield, Bolingbroke. He does not appear to have met with a single Christian of note. It was the time when Woolston was publishing his Discourses denying the Divinity of Christ, in which he was openly supported by a number of leading gentlemen. Voltaire's impressions of England at that time were thus expressed in a letter: "There is no room in this country for any religion, whether revealed or not." The days of Wesley and Whitefield were at hand, but they had not yet arrived.

England, however, had a double advantage over France: the first one was, that the Church of England, low as she was then, was not a persecutor. The Anglicans might drive the Methodists out of their pulpits, but they could not prevent them from preaching in the open air or in buildings of their own. In France, a Wesley or a Whitefield would have been hanged.

The second advantage of England over France at that time, was that the Bible was a free possession of the people, while it had been denied to us.

Voltaire and his confederates had no real persecution to fear. The Church of Rome has often caused the death of men who served the Christ

whom she professed to love, but did not serve Him in her own way; and at the same time she had treasures of forbearance for those children of hers, such as Voltaire, who trampled under their feet the very blood of Christ. To this day, however small and unostentatious an Evangelical community may be, Rome will have no peace until it has been put out of existence, if she can bring it about; while infidel societies may flourish without causing her much disquietude. A simple Bible colporteur puts her in dread far more than does the most eloquent lecturer on atheism. The present Pope, Benedict xv., in a speech solemnly delivered at the Vatican on behalf of some Catholic Society, violently denounced the scandal of Protestant propaganda in the city of Rome; while he has not yet, to our knowledge, taken the trouble to denounce the free-thinking clubs and associations which abound in the Eternal City.

We do not intend to dwell on the writings of Voltaire and his associates, the Encyclopædists. All of them have become obsolete. As to the life of this extraordinary man, it manifested the immense pride which was the mainspring of all his doings. Though born a commoner, Voltaire was an aristocrat to the core; nor was he over nice as to the means of raising himself. He fawned on the great, from whom he suffered indignities which a real gentleman could never have accepted; he became the guest, the domestic philosopher, of that greatest of Hohenzollerns,

Frederick II., with whom he vied in levity and blasphemy. The one trait which somewhat relieves the unpleasant picture of Voltaire's long life, was his plea for religious toleration, and especially his generous intervention on behalf of the unfortunate Calas family.¹

The question which most concerns us is this: How was it that Voltaire's shallow infidelity took such a hold of the French mind, and, to a large extent, of the whole of Europe, England excepted? The main reason is, no doubt, that a reaction against the system of blind and compulsory belief which prevailed everywhere, but especially in France, at that period, was inevitable, necessary and, on the whole, beneficial, though its extreme forms were greatly to be deplored. "He that soweth the wind shall reap the whirlwind." Voltaire's sarcasms would have had much less power, if indeed there had been a Voltaire, had the French Reformation been allowed full development. Thriving Christian communities, made up of regenerate men and women leading

¹ Jean Calas, a wealthy Huguenot merchant living in the city of Toulouse, was falsely accused of the murder of one of his sons, who was found hanged in the house. The reason alleged was that the son had, against his father's will, become a Roman Catholic, which was true. It was shown afterwards that he had committed suicide. Calas was arrested, tried and condemned, notwithstanding his solemn protests and his unsullied reputation. He was executed. But Voltaire took up the case, convinced public opinion of the innocence of the father and compelled the unwilling judges to acknowledge their awful error, caused by their bigoted prejudices. The memory of Calas was officially rehabilitated. This judicial crime stirred at the time all Europe.

noble and devoted lives would have been an apology of Christianity which could not have been easily gainsaid, and instead of falling on the ears of an ignorant people, Voltaire's ingenious fallacies would have been met by a host of learned and enlightened men, who would have made short work of them.

In the failure of the Churches—both Catholic and Protestant—to check Voltaire's influence by the power of the Spirit, one is thankful that Voltaire was met, and vigorously contradicted, by a man who was his equal in genius, though he did not attain in his lifetime to the degree of popularity enjoyed by Voltaire. That man was Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As retiring and reserved as Voltaire was loud and self-glorious, Rousseau was a far deeper mind, with a sense of life and death, a serious view of the universe and of God, which were wholly absent from Voltaire's mental constitution.

Rousseau was the first of a large number of men who have contributed to mould the soul of France as it is to-day.

Born in Geneva (1712) from an old French Protestant family who had emigrated there as early as 1555 on account of the persecutions, he had something of the stolidity of purpose which characterized the Huguenots. His education, however, was sadly neglected, owing to his father's carelessness. Protestant piety in Geneva was at a low ebb; the Church was almost wholly

given up to formalism, and the preaching of the ministers was devoid of spiritual power.

Rousseau had a most checkered life, and the first part of it was not very creditable. He was induced to become a Catholic by a woman, much older than himself, who was the evil genius of his youth. Years after, he solemnly re-entered the Protestant Church of Geneva, and even signed the orthodox formulary which was still the law of the Church. But all through those variations he was simply a deist. His deism, however, as expressed in his celebrated and eloquent *Confession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard*, was intensely religious. While Voltaire seems to have entirely lacked that mystic sense by which even an unregenerate soul is able to perceive, at least dimly, some spiritual realities, Rousseau was full of respect for the unseen.

Rousseau's religion—if it may be called by that name—started with a most bewitching fallacy: the natural goodness of man. His was the religion of nature. Leave the child to himself, do not prejudice his mind with false notions, keep him free from the corrupting and lying influences of society, lead him gently on the path of natural development, and all will be well with him. Conscience is the only revelation of God that is needed, and the only one which has been given to us. Rousseau professed a strong antagonism towards the conventionalities and vulgarities of the aristocratic world; long before the modern

reformers, he advocated the simple life, a return to mother Nature.

Yet this natural religion did not quite satisfy Rousseau. He had glimpses of the higher truths. Every one knows that page of his in which he extols the beauty of the Scriptures: "The simplicity of the Gospels fills me with wonder, their holiness speaks to my heart. Look at all the books of the philosophers, with all their pomp; how insignificant they are compared with this! Is it possible that a book at once so sublime and so simple, should be the work of man? Is it possible that He whose history it contains should be only a man? Is that the tone of an ambitious sectary? What sweetness! What purity in His life, what winning grace in His teachings, what elevation in His maxims! Shall we say that the Gospel history has been invented at pleasure? My friend, it is not thus that inventions are made; and the facts of Socrates of which no one doubts, are less attested than those of Jesus Christ. . . . If the life and death of Socrates are of a sage, the life and death of Jesus Christ are of a God."

What a miraculous power there is in Divine truth! Persecuted, smothered, and for the time being reduced to silence, it can never be entirely suppressed. If its rightful interpreters fail in their duty, God will put its praises in the mouths of unwilling witnesses. While the Huguenot martyrs were slowly dying on the galleys; while the successors of Brousson: Antoine Court and

Paul Rabaut, were preaching the Gospel at the risk of their lives in the Cévennes; while the Church of Rome, now deprived of its most illustrious preachers, had fallen to the ignominy of having a Cardinal Dubois on the seat of Cambrai, which had been so worthily and so brilliantly occupied by Fénelon; and while Voltaire was holding up the Bible to the ridicule of the world, prophesying the near extinction of the religion based on that Book,—a writer was allowed to rise, one of the most eloquent and harmonious that ever adorned French letters; and though an unbeliever, that writer was compelled, by a higher power than king or pope, to acknowledge and to admire the supernatural beauty of the Book which Voltaire was deriding, and which the Church had kept from the people. Thus Rousseau's influence prevented the total wreck of the French soul. Voltaire was the destroyer of a world; Rousseau, in his *Contrat Social*, laid the foundations of a new one. He may be called the father of the French Revolution.

CHAPTER X

THE REVOLUTION. THE EMPIRE

THE Revolution of 1789, which inaugurated a new era for France and Europe, and put an end for ever to the autocratic power of kings and to the intolerance of priests, issued from a number of causes ; but the spirit that animated the French nation at the beginning of that tremendous crisis was that of Rousseau, "the citizen of Geneva," as he was fond of calling himself. He and Voltaire died the same year (1778), when the first trepidations of the coming catastrophe were beginning to be felt.

There was such a candour, such a fervour, in the minds and hearts of the French people when the dawn of liberty shone upon them ; there was such an enthusiasm for the higher values of life—Right, Equality, Brotherhood—that it seemed as if a breath of heaven had passed over the land.

Remember, for instance, that famous night of August 4, 1789, when the nobles and the prelates seemed to be drunk with the holy intoxication of sacrifice, vying with one another in

bringing up to the light, in the great National Assembly, all abuses, privileges, benefices and tithes which had been theirs from time immemorial, and giving them up, of their own will, going even so far—in true radical French fashion—as to renounce their titles—lords, barons, counts, dukes—in a frenzy of equality. . . . This extraordinary disinterestedness did not last long, in the case of some; but did it not testify that a spirit higher than their own was, at that moment, brooding over the members of the august Assembly?

Just a little before the beginning of the Revolution, Benjamin Franklin had lived in Paris, where he had been greatly lionized as the representative of the newly-founded United States. Franklin was an Anglo-Saxon edition of Rousseau, with more good sense, but with less genius. The influence of the new-born democratic Republic, and of Franklin especially, blended with that of Rousseau, greatly contributed to the formation of the soul of France at that time, as is evidenced by the *Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme et du Citoyen* (Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen) which was voted by the Assemblée Constituante in that same year, 1789. That Declaration was inspired by the American Declaration of Independence, though by no means a translation of it. Both have their distinct features, embodying the mental constitution of the two nations, the oldest and the youngest of the civilized world; yet both these documents are

manifestly issued from the same source, and are the charts of a Christian democratic civilization.¹

Of course, there was not enough genuine Christianity in all this to create a new people, in the Gospel sense of the term. The great central principle of the Gospel, "Ye must be born again," was ignored by Rousseau, Franklin, the French and American legislators; nor would it have been possible and right to incorporate it in the new Constitutions. In its very essence the Gospel eludes any attempt to frame it into national laws. When, therefore, we speak of any nation as being "Christian," we must qualify the term. It can only mean this: that there have been at work, in that nation, a number of truly regenerate individuals, who, by the influence of their lives, words and deeds, have so modified the mentality and morality of their non-regenerate fellow-citizens that these have, of themselves, adopted rules of conduct distinctly borrowed from Christianity. According to that definition, it may be affirmed that the French Revolution, at its origin, was the effort of a Christian nation to realize its ideals.

It is indeed touching to see these people rejoicing in their newly-found Fraternity, celebrating it by great festivals on the Champ de Mars,²

¹ It would not be right to omit the name of a man who had a great influence on Rousseau and his contemporaries: Montesquieu, author of the celebrated work, *l'Esprit des Loix*, which Voltaire opposed. The book appeared in 1748, and had numberless editions.

² La Fête de la Fédération (July 14, 1790).

and even taking their meals together in the streets during the summer season, so that Paris was, during the halcyon days of the Republic (1792), a big family, full of mutual kindness, good humour and patriotic effervescence. One may smile at the naïveté of such manifestations, and yet he must be very hardened against the charm of such sincerity and simplicity of heart, who does not realize that there was in those days something like a breeze from Galilee passing through the narrow streets of Paris and of the other cities of France.

Had there been a spirit of evangelism among the Protestants of that time; had a new Farel arisen to take advantage of the absolute liberty of speech which then reigned, to stand at street corners and to proclaim the grace of God, what miracles might have taken place! But Protestantism, so long persecuted, was but the shadow of itself. Geneva, the head and heart of the Reformed Churches, was governed by an intellectual and cold orthodoxy, which was gradually being superseded by a theistic system of philosophy, savouring more of Rousseau than of Calvin.

In France there were few faithful preachers left. The most illustrious was Paul Rabaut, pastor at Nîmes. For fifty years this sturdy Huguenot maintained the Gospel testimony, not only in that city, but throughout a large section of the South. He preached in the open air,

near Nîmes, in a large quarry still to be seen, to several thousands of people, the authorities, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, having become more lenient, although Rabaut's life was often in peril. The good man lived long enough to see at last the Edict of Toleration granted by the good King Louis XVI., in 1787. When the Revolution broke out, two sons of Rabaut, both ministers like their father, but with less of Huguenot fire, were elected as Representatives of the people of the first Assemblée Nationale. The elder, Rabaut Saint-Etienne, being elected President of the Assembly, wrote to his old father, the long-persecuted preacher, this beautiful message : " My father, the President of the National Assembly is at your feet." But poor Rabaut Saint-Etienne was beheaded during the Reign of Terror (1793), and the stricken father died shortly afterwards. The second son, Rabaut Pommier, escaped the perils of those tragic days ; he lived to be one of the first Protestant pastors of the restored Church of Paris, and died in 1820.

There was another godly pastor, Jean Gachon, a minister in the Cévennes, whose soul was burning with the pure flame of God's Spirit, having received much blessing from his contact with the Moravian Brethren, disciples of the celebrated Count von Zinzendorf. No doubt Paul Rabaut and Jean Gachon were not alone. However, during the Revolutionary period the

light of the Gospel did not shine brightly. The Roman Catholic Church, long a persecutor, was in her turn persecuted. The Jansenists had been almost annihilated.¹

For a short time Paris and some cities of France gave themselves up to a foolish worship, that of the goddess Reason. During that period it was not safe to profess any sort of religious faith. A people which had long been compelled to yield blind obedience to an exacting priesthood, now took its mad revenge: thousands of priests, and most of the ministers that were left, were constrained under pain of death to bring their sacred insigns—vestments, chalices, etc.—on the altars of Reason, declaring that they renounced all superstition, and promising to teach the people nothing which was contrary to Reason. Happily, that madness did not last.

¹ The scope of this work forbids us to enter into the discussion of the action of the early Republican Government with regard to the Church. Wishing to control the interference of the Pope, the Assembly voted a "Civil Constitution of the Clergy," which made sacerdotal functions elective, thus republicanizing the Church itself. The larger part of the clergy refused to take the oath of allegiance to this new Constitution, which Rome had denounced as schismatic. The result was that for a few years there were two Catholic Churches, and two clergy. The one, persecuted, was in communion with the Pope; the other, enjoying the use of the churches and cathedrals, and supported by the State, was schismatic. These had little following, though some good men were among them. This led to a sort of religious war, and mightily helped the revolt of Vendée. It was evidently a mistake to try and reform the Church by law; and it was a remnant of the old spirit of intolerance which has been the bane of the world.

Nor did the new religion which a member of the Republican *Directoire*, Laréveillère-Lepaux, instituted under the high-sounding name of *Theophilanthropy*,—a religion which solely consisted in a cold deism and a code of morals. For this new worship, Laréveillère obtained official recognition and the free use of all sacred buildings. But the people were refractory; it was difficult to entice them to attend the drowsy sermons of the “theophilanthropic” lecturers. It is said that the father of this new Church was complaining before a witty friend of his, Talleyrand, a man who had been a Romish bishop, but had given up all faith—of the want of success of his doctrine. “Well,” said Talleyrand, “I will tell you what you should do, if you want your religion to succeed: go, be crucified and buried, then rise up again: I promise you, if you do that, a very large following.”

On coming to power, Napoleon found France without any external religion. The masses seemed practically detached from all forms of worship; but, deep down in the soul of France, there were principles, the force of which had manifested itself at the beginning of the Revolution; and now that the cyclone was over, calm reflection, and also a sense of having been deceived by the loud promises of the unbelieving leaders of the Republic, were inducing the people back to their old religious beliefs. Napoleon realized that a nation could not live long without

the moral restraint and support that Christianity alone affords. But what sort of Christianity should it be? He is reported to have said that he had found France so detached from all religious traditions, that she would have followed him had he chosen to make her Protestant. But Protestantism is averse to autocratic government, and Napoleon was an autocrat. He, therefore (and no doubt for other reasons also, some of a more intimate nature), chose to restore Roman Catholicism as the national religion.

Despotic in this as in everything else, he forced on the Pope, Pius VII., a Concordat which greatly checked the power of the Church. All ecclesiastical property, which had been confiscated by the Revolution, was to remain in the State's hands; tithes to remain abolished; the clergy to be supported by the State as functionaries with regular stipends; all appointments of bishops to be made jointly by the Emperor and the Pope; the clergy to give an oath of allegiance to the sovereign. The Protestant Churches had also their Concordat: the pastors were to be elected by the consistories, under the confirming power of the Emperor; the *temples*, or Protestant meeting-houses, were to be erected with State funds, and the pastors to receive a salary from the same. No general meetings, Synods, or Councils were to be held without the Emperor's consent. In fact, the Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, were fettered with chains of gold.

The new régime was accepted almost unanimously by all parties. There was not enough spirituality among the small Protestant remnant to perceive that the official protection of the State was going to be nearly as fatal to the life and progress of the Churches as persecution had been. From being outlaws, the ministers had suddenly become functionaries of the Empire, men of social importance, on an equal footing with the Romish clergy. We must remember that, except in England and in the newly-founded United States, there were at that time no Free Churches of any account anywhere. The Reformed Churches of France, therefore (or, as they now came to be called, the Reformed Church, in the singular), were not sinning against their own principles in accepting the Concordat. These principles were wrong, as we sincerely believe, but the time had not yet come for a movement towards full religious emancipation.

CHAPTER XI

THE REVIVAL OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

WHEN, at last, the bloody clouds of the long wars had been blown away, after the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, the effort of the two kings, brothers of Louis XVI., who succeeded one another on the throne of France,—Louis XVIII. and Charles X.—was to re-establish the old order of things, especially with regard to religion.

The monastic orders, among them the Jesuits, swarmed back, and numerous “missions” were set on foot throughout the land in order to “re-Christianize” it. But there was little spirituality in that effort, which aimed at political results more than at spiritual fruits. Nor were the means employed very spiritual. The wearing of blessed medals, scapularies and crucifixes; the worship of saints’ relics—spurious or genuine; the recital *ad nauseam* of *Paters* and *Aves*; the creation of all sorts of devotions which had been entirely ignored by the great Gallican bishops and preachers—gave to these “missions” a

materialistic character intensely repugnant to the French soul.

The worship of Mary as the Mother of God and the all-powerful Mediatrix, became the prominent feature of the new religion. Pilgrimages and other superstitions flourished among a certain class of people ; but the "bourgeoisie," as well as the intelligent working men, disgusted at these exhibitions of a crude faith, the preachers of which threatened their political liberties so dearly bought, turned again to Voltairianism, which was never so popular as in those days.¹

The moral element, which is ever foremost in a genuine Christian revival, was secondary in this effort to restore faith in the hearts of the people. Repentance is not a Romish word ; penitence is the substitute for it, and the difference of meaning is obvious. Repentance is the birth of a new life. Penitence is the patching up of an old one. This expresses accurately the difference between a Catholic revival and an Evangelical one.

As a memento of those missions, by which every town and village was supposed to have returned wholesale to God and to the Church, stone or iron crosses were erected with great pomp at the entrance of each town, or at cross-roads. There they are still, monuments of the Jesuits' attempt to recover France in the early

¹ Gallicanism, however, was not altogether dead. Some enlightened Catholics favoured the work of the Bible Societies.

part of the nineteenth century ; monuments, also, of the liberalism of the Republic, which has respected those emblems.

The reaction which then took place was led by a few writers of great value : Joseph de Maistre, the resolute champion of absolutism both in religion and in politics ; Châteaubriand, a brilliant but shallow mind ; Lamennais, at first a defender of the Romish faith, but who finally broke away from Rome and died unreconciled to her—he had a great influence over the masses.

Victor Hugo began his public career at that time, and his youthful lyre was Catholic ; but later on he greatly modified his views. Indeed, the splendid poetry of Victor Hugo throughout his long life (1802–84) may be considered as the faithful echo of the nation's mind. He changed with the times, and, apparently, did so with perfect good faith. There never was a writer who took such a hold of the French people as did Victor Hugo. He gave a voice—a most eloquent one—to those incomplete, but genuine, elements of Christianity that have never ceased to exist in the subconsciousness of the French soul. The great principle of the Gospel—the sacrifice of self for the sake of others—comes out again and again in his productions, in *Les Misérables*, for instance, or in that charming, one may say Evangelic poem, *les Pauvres Gens*. The latest spirit of Victor Hugo was that of Rousseau. Four lines of his, written under a crucifix, have

been and are still among the most familiar of all French verse :

“ Vous qui pleurez, venez à ce Dieu, car Il pleure.
Vous qui souffrez, venez à Lui, car Il guérit.
Vous qui tremblez, venez à Lui, car Il sourit.
Vous qui passez, venez à Lui, car Il demeure ! ”¹

The sense of sin, the need of repentance in the Gospel sense of the word, and the atoning value of the blood of Christ—all this is lacking in Victor Hugo's religion ; and the same may be said of the writings of Châteaubriand and of Lamartine. The latter, however, went much deeper than any of the other two, in adoration and a true sense of God.

Béranger and his *Chansons*, which in their simplicity of style remind one of Lafontaine, had a very great influence in those days on the popular mind. He was a liberal and a deist.

While these great minds, and many others, filled the world with new-found harmony, the Protestant Churches of France were in a sad state. There were few ministers who had a real knowledge and personal experience of grace. The long period of war had entirely separated the French Reformed from their brethren in other lands. There had been no Bibles printed, and the scarcity of the Word of God was not even

¹ “ You weeping ones, come to this God, for He weeps.
You suffering ones, come to Him, for He heals.
You trembling ones, come to Him, for He smiles.
You passing ones, come to Him, for He abides.”

realized, so few were those who hungered for it. Outwardly, things were not much better. The Concordat had given official recognition, and freedom to assemble in their own buildings; but there was no liberty, had men wished to use it, for evangelistic effort. If, perchance, some Roman Catholic joined them, both the new convert and the minister who had received him in his church were liable to prosecution. There were very few books or tracts of any kind.

The Theological Seminary which Antoine Court had established at Lausanne in 1720, had been transferred to Montauban in 1808. It had about sixty students, but the teaching given in it was of the poorest sort, and the truths of the Gospel were almost entirely ignored.

There were, however, a few ministers who had the Divine life in them: Lissignol of Montpellier, Chabrand of Toulouse, Gachon, whom we have already noticed, Marzials of Montauban and some others. And there was—a host in himself—Oberlin, the pastor of Ban-de-la-Roche, in Alsace, then a French province, and soon, we hope, to be one again.

Oberlin's zeal, his success as a pioneer of the Gospel and of civilization in a district which was only half-civilized when he came to it—all this is well known. Such a man—even if he had been the only one of his stamp, which was not the case—would have sufficed to show that the Spirit of God had not altogether deserted France.

He died at the advanced age of eighty-six, on June 1, 1826, having worked for sixty years amidst extraordinary difficulties and under the most varied political régimes, leaving behind him a transformed parish, and a remembrance which is fragrant still throughout the whole world.

Oberlin was the first correspondent of the British and Foreign Bible Society in France, as far back as 1804, the very year of the Society's birth. Oberlin's influence was a great factor in the awakening of the churches in Alsace. That province had become French in 1648 by the Treaty of Westphalia (Strasbourg remained a free city till 1681). The treaty stipulated that the religion of the people would be respected. In consequence, the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was not enforced in Alsace; and this liberal policy went far to deepen the patriotic feelings of the Alsatian people toward France—feelings which were greatly strengthened at the time of the Revolution, the Alsatians being among its heartiest supporters. It must not be forgotten that the "Marseillaise," in spite of its name, came into existence in Strasbourg, being composed in that city and sung for the first time by its author, Rouget de Lisle, in the drawing-room of Dietrich, Mayor of Strasbourg, in April 1792. In 1798 the free city of Mulhouse, of her own will, joined herself to the French Republic. Since that time Alsace has played a conspicuous part in the history of France.

The Alsatian Churches—mainly of the Lutheran persuasion, with a good number of the Reformed—were under the spell of German theology. But from time to time men of faith appeared among them: Houber, Oberlin's predecessor at the Ban-de-la-Roche, had been one; but Oberlin was the greatest of all.

A few years after Napoleon had given a Concordat to the Reformed Churches, the Lutherans in Alsace, as in Paris and other parts of France, such as le Pays de Montbéliard, which had been recently incorporated, were also officially recognized. God gave to their Church in Paris some excellent Evangelical preachers, such as Louis Meyer, and, more recently, George Appia and Pierre Dieterlen. Another son of Alsace and a disciple of Oberlin was Tommy Fallot, who has done a noble work in this country as pastor and social reformer. One should like to mention many other names worthy to be known. That of the celebrated Baron Cuvier, the great naturalist, cannot be passed over. He was a faithful member of the Lutheran Church. No one can overestimate the contribution of the Alsatians to the spiritual, moral and social life of France during the Nineteenth Century, perhaps even more during the latter part of it, after the war of 1870, which compelled some of the best families to leave their country and to settle down in other parts of France.

Although the spiritual life of the Established

Protestant Churches, both Reformed and Lutheran, all over the country was very poor, there were, here and there, Christians who had the true light, and who met together for prayer and Bible study without severing their connection with the main Church. Some Moravian evangelists, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, had begun this good work. At Nîmes, when the Methodists began their labours in 1821, they found meetings of the Moravian type which had existed long before the Revolution, and had been maintained even during its darkest days.¹

It could not therefore be said that the truth had no representatives in France. Considering how long and severe had been the persecutions, immediately succeeded by the tumult of the Revolution and the twenty-five years of war; considering also that, for nearly a century, there had reigned an atmosphere of infidelity, all the more insidious for the young people because it was the only form of liberalism which they knew (for Protestantism itself was not free from a spirit of intolerance in the countries where it ruled)—may we not say that the preservation of even a small amount of true spiritual life in this country was nothing short of a miracle?²

¹ See Appendix C, on the ministry of Jean de Labadie.

² It is right that mention should be made here of a remarkable group of about two hundred people, who cannot be better described than by the name of French Quakers; for, while they had no knowledge of the existence of the English "Society of Friends," they held practically the same views. They were to be found in

But now the time had come for that gracious visitation of God's Spirit which was second only to that of the Reformation days : *the great French Revival of the nineteenth century*. The initiator of that movement was a Scotsman, Robert Haldane.

Scotland owed much to France, which by means of Calvin's teaching had made John Knox what he was, and had given our Northern friends that form of Church government which is so dear to them, Presbyterianism. It was fit, therefore, that Scotland should send back to France something of what she had received from her ; and she did so, when she sent us, for a few short years, one of the two Haldanes.

Robert Haldane, a wealthy landowner and a naval officer, was converted after six years spent at sea. He and his brother James became evangelists whom God used mightily in their own country. James was ordained, but Robert remained a layman : would to God there were many such ! He took the greatest interest in the defence of Biblical truth, and became an able and deeply instructed teacher. Above all,

villages near the city of Nîmes, and were, probably, a remnant of those "prophets" which had arisen in the absence of regular ministers at the time of the Revocation, and whom Antoine Court had vigorously put down. The French Quakers, still few in number but faithful and steadfast, have since linked themselves with their English brethren. From their small community excellent Christians have risen, whose services to the cause of Christ cannot be overestimated,

he was burning with love for his Saviour, and for the souls He came to redeem.

In 1816, being about fifty years of age, he was led, partly through some disappointments he had experienced in Scotland, to seek opportunities of serving the Master on the Continent, now for the first time, after so many years of war, opened to British travellers.

He first came to Paris, but found there no opening. However, he followed the advice of a friend and went to Geneva, which was still the bulwark of French Protestantism.

“On my arrival,” he says, “I called on the late M. Moulinié, and conversed with him on the Gospel. He was very kind, but appearing to acquiesce in all that I advanced, discussion on any point was out of the question, and no progress was made. . . . I, however, again visited M. Moulinié. . . . From all I could learn from him, Geneva was involved in the most deplorable darkness. It was . . . an unbroken field of labour, with a fallen Church. Calvin, once its chiefest boast and ornament, with his doctrines and works, had been set aside and forgotten, while the pastors and professors were in general Arians or Socinians. Some exceptions among them there were, including M. Moulinié, who held the divinity of our Lord Jesus, and, I believe, loved and served Him according to their light; but . . . they preached neither law nor Gospel fully. . . . A small prayer-meeting had for some

time been held, in consequence, I believe, of a visit of Madame de Krüdener to Geneva; and by one belonging to it I was told that, sensible of their want of knowledge, they had prayed that an instructor should be sent to them, and that their prayer, they now believed, was answered."

And so it was. Haldane did not then fully know to what extent his visit had been Divinely prepared.

Some two or three years before, a number of godly young men, students of theology, had formed among themselves a society for prayer and mutual exhortation, much opposed by the "Vénérable Compagnie" of the pastors. These young men's awakening was due, not only to the visit of the celebrated Baroness de Krüdener, the mystic friend of Tsar Alexander I., but also, and even more, to the group of Moravian Brethren who, though much reduced in numbers, had never ceased to meet in Geneva.¹

Haldane was on the point of leaving Geneva, finding, as he thought, no opening there, when a casual conversation he had with a young man led him to decide on remaining. And for a year or more he held Bible-readings with those theological students whose hearts God had already touched, but whose ignorance with regard to the saving truths of the Gospel was appalling. The

¹ We have noticed above (p. 148) that a similar group had also persisted in the city of Nîmes. No one can overestimate the debt of Christendom to the Moravian Brethren,

names of some of those godly young men have become household words among Evangelical Christians in France and in other lands. They are those of Merle-d'Aubigné, the author of the classical *History of the Reformation*; Frédéric Monod, who became one of the leading pastors of France and the chief founder of the Free Churches;¹ Bonifas, a future theologian of great ability and consecration; Guers, who, living in Geneva all his life, became one of the chief instruments of the Revival in that city. Two young ministers, though already ordained and in charge of parishes round Geneva, received from Haldane the fulness of light they needed; both became mighty workers for Christ, and a blessing to the Church universal; their names were, Louis Gaussen, author of *Theopneustia*, and César Malan, of whom we shall speak again later on. Two other names must also be mentioned, of men who became the leading evangelists of France, though both were Swiss: Henri Pyt and Ami Bost.

The three main characteristics of Haldane's Revival, as it has sometimes been called, were these: (1) it gave a paramount emphasis to the necessity of a personal knowledge and experience of grace; (2) it maintained the absolute authority and Divine inspiration of the Bible; (3) it was a return to Calvinistic doctrine, against Pelagianism

¹ He was the father of Pasteur Théodore Monod, whose name is so well known in connection with the early Keswick movement,

and Arminianism. Haldane was an orthodox of the first water ; but his orthodoxy was blended with love and life.

The subject of Haldane's teaching during that eventful year was the Epistle to the Romans. Twice a week the young men sat around the table in the Scottish gentleman's drawing-room, while he was carefully opening to them the mysteries of redeeming grace. His French being imperfect, one of the students served as interpreter. The study was followed by a time for answering questions, and was concluded with prayer. The intelligent listeners to those lectures all testified in after years that they had been enlightened by them, both in heart and mind, in a manner that was scarcely short of a revelation. No wonder that the infidel professors of the University were angry with the Scotsman, and that one of them, Chennevière, went even so far as to watch from a distance the door of Haldane's house, to spy the students who went to the lectures.

A few years later, another Scotsman, Erskine, was the means of bringing to conversion a young minister who became the greatest of French preachers, and who might have rivalled Bossuet himself had he preached in cathedrals ; his name was Adolphe Monod, younger brother of Frédéric, and who also had been a student of the Geneva Faculty of Theology.

When Haldane had finished his work in

Geneva, he went to Montauban, the seat of another theological seminary, where he arrived in July 1817.

“At the time of Mr. Haldane’s arrival at Montauban” (says his biographer)¹ “the Dean of the Faculty was the distinguished M. Daniel Encontre, who, up to the year 1814, had been president of the Faculty of Sciences of Montpellier. M. Encontre held a high place as a man of science, and, next to Laplace, was then considered the most distinguished mathematician in France. “I have seen,” said the celebrated Fourcroy, “two or three men in France his equals in intellect,—I have never yet seen his superior.” In theology, Mr. Haldane found him to be a strong Arminian, and very indistinct in his apprehensions of truth; but the philosopher soon learned to regard the talents, as well as the piety, of his new acquaintance with profound respect. Confident in his own powers and great attainments, M. Encontre was usually somewhat dogmatic in the assertion of his philosophic views, and impatient of contradiction; and it was remarked that the only person before whom he ever seemed disposed to bow was Robert Haldane. They had many conversations together on the way of salvation, and there was obviously a great struggle in his mind between the truths of the Gospel and the arrogance of a proud philosophy.

¹ The lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of his brother, by Alexander Haldane, Esq.

"O science! science!" he would sometimes exclaim, as if he felt the painfulness of the contest. . . . But the victory was not doubtful, and when he finally took leave of his friends to go for change of air to Montpellier, M. Encontre—who was then in a feeble, and, as it proved, a dying state, grasped Mr. Haldane's hand and said with emotion: "Je suis un grand pécheur, mais j'ai un grand Répondant!" (I am a great sinner, but I have a great Surety).

". . . The strong public testimony which he latterly bore to his Scottish friend, and the value he set on his writings, was another token that their intercourse had not been without fruit. After recommending to the students the *Evidences of Christianity*, Dr. Bogue's *Essay on the Authority of the New Testament*, which had been translated into French, and is said to have been used by Napoleon at St. Helena, and noticing Paley, he added: "Read also, as soon as possible, that admirable work which the learned Robert Haldane, of Edinburgh, now residing at Montauban, is about to publish—a man who seems to have consecrated his whole time and labour and watchings, and, in a certain sense, all his property, to the Church of the Lord."

CHAPTER XII

SOME PREACHERS OF THE REVIVAL

LET us return to Geneva, and to the awakened students whom Haldane had left there, entrusting them to the care of God. Just as he was leaving the city another British Christian was entering it, Mr. Drummond. The newcomer was an instrument in strengthening the faith of the new converts, and in guiding them through difficult passages, for opposition was very keen, and became increasingly so, until the young Christians felt reluctantly compelled to leave the old Established Church and to form a new one, the first Free Church ever established in French-speaking countries. That Church became a centre of life, from which went forth some gifted men who, for zeal, endurance and disinterestedness, may stand comparison with the early preachers of the Reformation. As they were the pioneers of the French Revival, it is well that we should give them more than a passing mention.

Foremost among them was Henri Pyt. He laboured, sent by the Geneva Church, first among the peasants and miners of the North of France,

where he discovered a nucleus of Christians, mostly converts from Romanism, who spent their evenings in reading the Bible, of which one of them happened to possess a copy.

Leaving the North after most fruitful labours, Pyt visited the centre of France, founding a church, which is still extant, in a village near the old cathedral city of Chartres, named Gaubert. Thence he was led to Bayonne, and worked there with much success, reviving those ancient Béarn churches which had been so flourishing in early Reformation days. Finally, he settled in Paris, and spent himself there on all the committees and Christian undertakings that the new Evangelism was speedily bringing into existence; there he fell, in 1835, all too early, used up by his apostolic zeal, at the age of forty-one.

Ami Bost, friend and brother-in-law of Pyt, was also a fruit of Haldane's labours. Full of ability, gifted with an artistic temperament and an untiring zeal, he did not, perhaps, equal his friend in that serenity of mind and solidity of character which made Pyt a model missionary. But his work was owned of God. He wrote religious musical compositions of value. He was the father of a number of gifted sons, the foremost of whom was John, founder of the well-known Laforce Institutions, in which over five hundred persons, including orphans and all sorts of incurables, are mercifully cared for. Ami Bost

died at his son's residence, Laforce, in 1875, at the ripe age of seventy-eight.

Another young Swiss whose name will ever be remembered by the grateful Protestants of France, was Félix Neff. He was not one of Haldane's converts : at the time of the Lectures on Romans he was a lad of eighteen, and a soldier in the small army of the Geneva Republic. At nineteen he was a sergeant. The son of a godly mother, he was not without spiritual cravings, as was testified by his oft-repeated prayer at that time : " O God, whoever Thou art, reveal Thy truth to me, show Thyself to my soul." He began to read the Bible, and was soon in deep conviction of sin, from which he was delivered by reading a little book of Thomas Wilcocks, translated into French, *Le miel découlant du rocher*, probably given him by Haldane's friends, whose society he joined in 1819, soon afterwards leaving the military service to become an evangelist.

He began his labours in Geneva, but soon came to France and devoted himself to the evangelization of the mountainous districts of the Isère and the Drôme, on the western side of the Alps. His short life was all spent in that region ; first at Grenoble, then at Mens, and finally in the rugged and almost unapproachable district known as les Hautes-Alpes, where the remnant of the French Waldenses had found a refuge some centuries before. There were there

several parishes utterly abandoned, and needing not only the Gospel, but even the elementary notions of civilized life. "The wretchedness and squalor of these mountaineers then defied description. Many houses had neither chimneys nor windows; the whole family lived in the stable, at least during the winter, which at those altitudes lasts seven months, when the sun is hardly visible on account of the huge mountains that surround the villages; and the stable was cleaned out only once a year! Food and raiment were no better. Bread was baked once a year, and soaked in water in order to be rendered eatable. No doctor lived there. The manners and customs had become savage: gambling, wife-beating, debauchery, were common practices. These descendants of the martyrs had, indeed, fallen very low."

Neff applied himself with unsparing energy and patient faith, born of love, to the work of rescuing these miserable people. We can barely sum up the multitude of his efforts. He preached from house to house, Sundays and week-days, ever travelling over his immense parish, which was more than sixty miles long, with bad roads and no conveyances, deprived of the most elementary comforts, and even, sometimes, of bare necessities.¹

¹ We personally remember an old gentleman, who, in his youth, had been one of Neff's parishioners, and had been converted by him. What a vivid, loving memory he had kept of the young missionary! "Half a dozen of us, young fellows, felt much attached to Neff, and went with him through the snows, from one

We cannot follow Neff in his heroic labours. He permanently transformed that country, materially and spiritually, in the course of a five years' ministry, which ended with his life after a very painful illness, the result of the hardships he had endured. He died in 1829, at the age of thirty-one.

César Malan, who, while a minister of the Geneva State Church, had been wonderfully affected by Haldane's ministry, became a preacher of great power. A strong Calvinist and Presbyterian, he was an evangelist of great ability, and gave many years of his long life to preaching the Gospel in France, even while he held the pastorate of a church in Geneva. He was the great hymnologist of the Revival. Up to that time, only the Psalms and a few solemn hymns, written in the eighteenth century by Bénédict Pictet, were sung in churches. Malan's

village to another, just to keep him company. But, though we loved the man, our hearts were utterly unconcerned about his message. One Sunday night, Neff had been preaching all day long at different places ; it was his last service for the day ; and, as he was proceeding with his sermon, all at once he bent over the table towards us, with his pale, tired face, and said, his eyes filling with tears: 'Dear, dear friends, you know all about it, I wish you would give yourselves to Christ!' His longing for our salvation, the love that burned so evidently in his heart towards us—it was THAT which broke our resistance. We, too, began to cry, and the evening was not over but every one of us had yielded to the Spirit." My old friend, while thus recounting what had happened fifty years before, was all aglow. He had become a rich merchant ; but the dew of Neff's love was still fresh on his soul.

hymns, *les Chants de Sion*, had a great success, and many are in use still.¹

Just after Haldane's fruitful visit to Geneva and Montauban, another British Christian came over to this country, whose labours in France have been wonderfully blessed. His name was Charles Cook, and he was sent to us by the English Methodist Conference.

The Conference had tried before to evangelize France; even as far back as the Revolutionary period, and on several occasions afterwards, she had sent excellent men, two of whom—du Pontavice and de Kerpezdron—were French noblemen who, having emigrated to England after the fall of the Monarchy, had found the truth of the Gospel, and had returned to France, under Napoleon's reign, as missionaries. But these efforts could only be tentative. It was not till October 1818, with the arrival of Charles Cook at Caen, that Methodist work in France really began.

"Charles Cook, to the vigour of youth, joined great prudence. He had deep piety, knowledge of men, business capacities, great reserve, and firmness of mind, which was tempered by reflexion and circumspection. . . . His conscience was so upright, so deep was his faith, so respectable his character, and so burning his zeal, that he soon

¹ It was through Malan's ministry, while on a visit to England, that Charlotte Elliott was converted to God. She wrote many hymns, among them the well-known "Just as I am," which was translated into French (*Tel que je suis*. . .).

acquired great authority." So spoke of him one of our most distinguished writers, de Félice.

Few months sufficed him to acquire such a practical knowledge of French, that he was able to write a French sermon as quickly as an English one. Welcomed by the Reformed pastor of Caen, he evangelized the country around, where there were a few Protestant parishes in the midst of an intensely bigoted Catholic population. But the labours of Charles Cook were not destined to be limited to Normandy. With his friend, Pasteur Rollin of Caen, he visited the South of France, in 1819, and in the course of the journey made the acquaintance of all the godly ministers of that region, who gave him a hearty welcome, Calvinists though they were. "Do you preach," asked Lissignol, "justification by faith?" "Yes," replied Cook, "we do it with as much force and clearness as any other religious body." "All right, then," said Lissignol; "that, to me, is the essential point; whoever is right there, cannot fall into very great errors on other points. I shall be very glad to have the help of your missionaries."

Methodism was thus introduced into France, not, at first, as a new denomination, but as a Society within the old Protestant Church, which it intended to revive.

Cook multiplied his efforts, travelling incessantly, his centre being at Caveirac, near Nîmes. Those efforts were greatly owned of God. Through him and his associates, Methodism has

done a great work in the country. The Methodist fire, allied with the spiritual forces which had been revived by Haldane, gave rise to what may truly be called a new French Protestantism. But the Methodists could not long retain their position of mere helpers of the Established Church. They were led by the force of circumstances, and in some cases were constrained by the opposition of those they had wished to help, to form separate congregations, in the South, in Normandy, in the East of France, and in Paris. Their work has been, and is still, excellent under that form; but one may question whether their main efficiency has not been in fostering everywhere a spirit of true Evangelism, by emphasizing the necessity of personal conversion, which was the distinctive note of early Methodist preaching.¹

¹English though he was, Charles Cook so identified himself with France that he married a French lady, the daughter of Pasteur Marzials of Montauban, a friend of Robert Haldane. That was, at the same time, practising the *Entente Cordiale* and the *Evangelical Alliance* before those things were even spoken of. His distinguished sons were French, and laboured with honour and success in the same cause as their father, whose name is used even to-day as a nickname for those who profess true faith. In the region round about Nîmes, to be a *couque*, means to be a real Christian.

Emile Cook specialized in Sunday-school work; he gave a great impetus to it in France, if he did not originate it. At the time of our writing, a son of Emile, a grandson of Charles, is chaplain to the French forces in Morocco, and a great-grandson is a soldier at the Front.

French Methodism has received much help from the Channel Islands. Several honoured families of pastors and evangelists came from there, and have become quite French.

As a river which separates into numerous channels, the French Evangelical movement expanded and branched off in various directions in the first half of the nineteenth century. It is sometimes difficult to know how some of these secondary movements commenced. Baptist views, for instance, have been of long standing in this country. As far back as the twelfth century, Pierre de Bruys was opposing the baptism of infants; in the seventeenth, Jean de Labadie came to hold similar views, but he had, in France, no permanent followers. Haldane was a "baptized believer," though never connected with Baptist churches, and adverse to the formation of a new denomination: his aim had been simply to revive the old Church. Pyt, Guers, Porchat and a number of Geneva missionaries were also immersed on profession of their faith. It is ascertained that Pyt met, in the North, a group of converted people who, previously to his visit, had adopted Baptist views, and remained faithful to them.

The Baptist cause was established in France, about the year 1832, by some devoted American missionaries, who did not stay very long, and who left some Frenchmen in charge, under the auspices of the American Baptist Missionary Union.

J. B. Cretin was the principal pioneer of that cause in the North of France; and it has been our privilege to gather from him much informa-

tion as to the difficulties of evangelistic work in those early days. However, he succeeded in establishing new churches, formed mostly of Roman Catholic converts, and in bringing to Christ several families whose sons have been in the Gospel ministry for many years. Cretin's recollections of Henri Pyt, whom he had often heard in his youth, were most interesting. What a set of consecrated people were the "children of the Revival," as the Christians of that period have been called! Puritanic in the extreme, they had a holy fear of anything that savoured of worldliness; women and girls would not allow themselves the simplest ornament, the most innocent jewel. Their recreations consisted in singing Malan's hymns, then newly written. Nor were those northern Christians peculiar in that respect. The same characteristic was shared by all the congregations of "revived" Protestants; and in the Cévennes one finds still, though somewhat mollified, the same stern other-worldliness among the people who profess a spiritual Christianity.

Another spiritual movement of no mean value was originated by an Englishman of great linguistic and theological ability, amounting almost to genius, J. N. Darby; a man who might have done a much more efficient work had he adopted a more fraternal attitude toward other Christians. As it is, Plymouth Brethren (or Darbyistes, as they were called in France and

in Switzerland) have been, and are still, a great force. They are very numerous among the Protestants of the South—especially in the department of the Haute-Loire and the Ardèche; their gatherings, never advertised, are found in very many parts of France and French Switzerland. Their main contribution to the Church universal has been, the emphasis laid by them on the priestly character of every Christian, on the universal priesthood of the believers in Christ. Their attachment to the Bible is praiseworthy. But they lacked very much, until recently, in brotherliness towards other Christians, and in evangelistic zeal. One is happy to find that there has been of late a marked change in that respect. A section of these Brethren are broad in their sympathies, and are nobly spending themselves for the salvation of souls.

One may, perhaps, wonder that, writing on such a big subject as "the Soul of France," we should give so much importance to these small, and in appearance ineffective, Protestant "sects." Our reply will be that their influence is far greater than their mere numbers would imply. Just as Protestantism, though it is a very small portion of the French people, has been, and is still, an essential part of the national life, in the same manner these small dissenting bodies—to which should be added the Free Churches properly so called, which were founded later on—are, in many respects, essential to the very life of Protestantism.

The Churches issued from the Reformation must ever progress or perish ; there must be among them a constant search for more light, more power, more life ; and there must be—in contradistinction from the Romish system—a full liberty of soul, a holy emulation, a healthy individualism. Protestantism has never fared well except in liberty, in variety of views and of forms of worship. It is a remarkable thing that, while these new denominations were very small compared with the old Reformed Church, they helped to revive her, and furnished a very large proportion of the evangelists and missionaries which have laboured in France or on the foreign field.

True believers are the salt of the earth. A single consecrated life, in a village or small town, has often been the means of forming a new community of Christians. To-day, in the trenches, the testimony of one solitary Christian soldier will influence the conduct and moral attitude of a whole company. The presence of a few Evangelicals, belonging, perhaps, to one of those insignificant “sects” of which we have spoken, among the Roman Catholic masses, tends to destroy bigotry and prejudice, to create a desire for the truth, and even to bring to Christ some who, externally, will never leave the Romish Church, thus introducing within that Church itself a spirit which checks, more than perhaps we are aware, the intolerance of that great institution.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME FRUITS OF THE REVIVAL

THE reign of the Bourbon kings terminated with a crash. France had paid too dearly for her liberties to permit a return of old-time autocracy, which was the aim of King Charles x. and his ill-advised ministers. Louis-Philippe I., of the Orleans family, was elected King of *the French* (not King of *France*, as his predecessors had been), with the tricolour flag back again.¹ Words and symbols are of great importance in this country, so essentially idealistic.

Louis-Philippe's reign lasted from 1830 to 1848. At its beginning, there was great hope among the lovers of the Gospel in France. The king owed his elevation to the triumph of the liberal party. The future queen, wife of the king's eldest son, the Duc d'Orléans, was a Protestant, and a true disciple of Christ. One of the king's ministers, and for a long time the head of the Cabinet, M. Guizot, was a Huguenot and a firm believer in the Bible. Born in Nîmes from a father who had been guillotined under the Terror, and from ancestors who had suffered for their faith, Guizot

¹ The flag of the Bourbon monarchy was pure white, with golden lilies.

had been carefully brought up by an intelligent and pious mother, and his early days had been spent in Geneva. Under Napoleon and the Bourbons, he had made a name for himself in literature and politics, and his high character had won him universal respect. Having become a Minister of Public Instruction, he gave to France her first regular system of primary schools, a very great step forward. One of the reading books provided for those schools was the New Testament: it was the first time in our history that the Divine book was thus officially recognized.

That period was full of mental and spiritual fermentation. The country was eager to develop and to apply the principles of 1789. Within the Church of Rome the old Gallican spirit was reasserting itself. Men like Lamennais, Montalembert, Lacordaire (the eloquent Benedictine preacher), Ozanam, and many others, were trying to reconcile the Church with the aspirations of modern France—a task which has been undertaken again and again, but has always proved delusive, and ever will. It has tempted, and is still tempting, the noblest Catholic Christians. But there are only two alternatives for such men: either to leave the Church, as did finally Lamennais, then, long afterwards, Hyacinthe Loyson, and in our times Loisy and a host of others; or to submit, as did Lacordaire, and as the Modernists have all, with broken hearts, been compelled to do.

At that time a society was founded in Paris

for the purpose of bringing together in Christian fellowship and social work some of the most distinguished Catholics and Protestants. Its name was *Société de la Morale Chrétienne*. Its main originator was a gentleman, M. Casimir Rostan, a member of the Consular Service, in which capacity he had lived in the United States. He had found there the light of the Gospel, and from a careless sort of Catholic had become a Protestant and a Baptist. Returning to France, he employed himself in the progress of Evangelical Christianity, and in "the *rapprochement*" of all true believers. Some of the highest names—such as the Duc de Broglie, whose wife was the daughter of the celebrated Madame de Staël and the granddaughter of Necker (the Protestant Minister of Finance of unfortunate Louis XVI.)—belonged to the Society. Some members of the Romish clergy cordially associated with their Protestant brethren; but the Society was short-lived. The Pope pronounced his *veto*, and *la Morale Chrétienne* disappeared.¹

¹ The pathetic failure of such efforts contains a lesson which many warm-hearted Evangelicals find it hard to learn, namely, that Rome is unapproachable except by the door of unconditional surrender. Here is another case in point; though we are anticipating, as this last experiment was made in 1866:

Pasteur E. Pétavel of Switzerland took the initiative of founding a society for the purpose of producing a translation of the Bible which might be accepted by Catholics and Protestants alike. He was heartily supported by the Abbé Etienne Blanc of la Madeleine, and by a Jewish Hebrew scholar, M. Lévy Bing. Once again, some of the greatest names are found on the list of members:

If the union of Rome with the Evangelicals was impossible, the latter did not find much difficulty in uniting among themselves for their common objects. The great Revival, begun in 1816, brought to existence a number of institutions and societies—to which very few have been added since—thus demonstrating the practical value of a revived faith. Pages might be filled with the bare enumeration of the ecclesiastical, benevolent and evangelistic organizations which came to life between the years 1820 and 1850, when the Revival may be said to have given its full measure. Orphanages, Homes of Refuge for the aged and invalids, Hospitals, Deaconesses' Institutes, Primary and Secondary Schools, and very specially the *Société des Missions Évangéliques* of Paris, which boldly undertook work, first in South Africa (Basutoland), and the Tahiti Islands, later on in Senegal, in Madagascar, on the Zambezi and on the Congo.¹ Several Evangelization Societies were also founded at that time: one in Geneva,

Prince Louis-Lucien Bonaparte, Comte de Montalembert, Prince Albert de Broglie, the historian Amédée Thierry, Father Gratry, Abbé Loyson (brother of Hyacinthe), a number of leading pastors, among whom MM. Edmond de Pressensé and Théodore Monod. . . . Large and influential meetings were held, in which some important declarations were made. Abbé Loyson hailed the day coming when the unity of the Church could be fully realized, and expressed a veiled blame of the persecutions of the past. His speech, however, brought upon him the severity of his superiors, and its publication was forbidden. And, in the year following, the Society was dissolved on account of the retirement of all its Catholic members.

¹ The first missionary, Casalis, was a convert of Henri Pyt.

destined mainly to work in France, and one in Paris, both independent of any particular denomination; also, Home Mission Societies of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches; the Paris Tract Society; the Religious Book Society of Toulouse, founded by three wealthy and devoted brothers, MM. Courtois; and, first in order of time (in 1818), a Paris Bible Society, which, later on, divided on doctrinal matters, so that there are now two French Bible Societies. Such are some of the activities which sprang up during that eventful period, under the impulse of some of the men we have named, to whom must be added Mark Wilks, an English Christian of wonderful executive ability, Admiral Verhuell, Comte de Laborde, Comte A. de Gasparin, Baron de Staël, P. A. Stapfer and many others.

This was, indeed, the golden age of French Evangelism. The Reformation was, at last, allowed to bear its fruits, and the Churches so long cramped by public oppression were able, under the influence of the Spirit of God, to acquire those faculties without which they could not have prospered. Later on, Young Men's Christian Associations, and later still, Young Women's, were founded.

Remember that all these institutions had, and have still, to be supported by a very limited number of people. There were then, including children, at the utmost, one million Protestants in France (Alsace had not yet been wrenched from us).

Of these, how many might be said to have experienced the saving power of Christ, and to have a practical share in the great work we have just mentioned? Perhaps one-tenth; certainly not more. And yet, though the loss of Alsace has left us still more reduced, those institutions have not suffered. Out of the six hundred thousand Protestants of France to-day, it is difficult to know how many are Evangelical, and of these how many are truly converted; and these are doing the largest part of what is needed for the support of their churches—now all disestablished—and of their institutions, with some help from outside.

These points need to be emphasized, as the Revival of the nineteenth century has sometimes been represented as having been narrowly dogmatic, barren of social works, devoid of a truly humane spirit, and so taken up with the salvation of souls that it had no regard for the temporal needs and sufferings of this poor world of ours. It is most significant that, though a large number of ministers and parishes at that time belonged to the “liberal” or Rationalist party, there are few benevolent institutions among us which do not owe their existence to the Evangelicals alone. In recent times, liberalism, under the influence of German Higher Criticism, has asserted itself with new vigour; and one of its grievances against the old-fashioned Evangelicals was, that they did not

give themselves enough to the solution of the great social problems of the day. Yet, as a matter of fact, nearly all Temperance and social work has been started and is supported by the Evangelicals.

Among all these activities which marked the renaissance of French Evangelism, none can be compared for efficiency with the work of the Bible Societies. The two French ones liberally provide Protestant homes and Sunday schools with the Scriptures they need, and their service cannot be overestimated. But for work outside our churches, for spreading the Word of God among the masses, we are indebted pre-eminently to that greatest and most important of all Evangelistic agencies, the British and Foreign Bible Society.

The colporteurs of the British and Foreign Bible Society (and those of the Society of Geneva) have done a work in France which, when the Eternal Light shall reveal all things, will probably appear as having yielded more real fruit than any other form of Christian propaganda. Words fly, but writings remain; how true this is when the "Writings" are Divine! During the last hundred years or so, through colportage and other agencies, from fourteen to fifteen million copies of the Word of God had been scattered through France before the War. Since the War began, the distribution of Gospels to the soldiers and their families has reached an enormous figure; besides the Bible Society, another English

agency, the Scripture Gift Association, has been able to distribute a million copies of the Gospels and a large number of Testaments.¹

There is scarcely a village of any importance where, at some time or other, a humble bearer of the Good News has not penetrated. In a number of cases, congregations of converted Christians have been the outcome of this apostolic form of evangelization. In many other instances, men and women have been converted to God, and have rejoiced in their salvation, while they had not light enough to enter into full liberty.²

But what is, perhaps, even more gratifying, is the undeniable effect that the circulating of the Bible has had upon Roman Catholicism itself. Priests dare no more, except very rarely, make bonfires of the Scriptures; indeed, some of the younger clergy read the Bible, and there have been cases, of late, where the priests have advised the people to buy the New Testament. Intolerance is

¹ Pasteur D. Lortsch, the Paris agent of the British and Foreign Bible Society, gives me the following figures: Volumes sold by the Society's colporteurs, from the beginning of the Society's activity in France to the close of 1914: six millions and a half. With all other agencies, volumes sold or given away during the same period: 14,267,441. As we were preparing this for the press, there occurred the unexpected and lamented death of our beloved friend, Pasteur D. Lortsch, than whom no one was more qualified for the great work he had on hand. His books: *La Bible dans le Monde*, and, very specially, *Histoire de la Bible en France*, will remain as religious classics.

² "Wherever Protestantism has done propaganda work, the Bible colporteur has generally preceded, sooner or later, the pastor" (*Univers*, a Catholic paper, February 8, 1911).

abhorrent to the French soul. Clericalism is one of the most hated words of the language. All this, in a large measure, is due to Evangelical influence.

The popularity of the Scriptures among the French of to-day may be illustrated by the case of Henri Lasserre and his translation of the Gospels. Henri Lasserre, an officer in the army, was healed of an eye disease by the intercession, as he believed, of the Virgin; in consequence of which he devoted his life to religious work. Being a scholar and a beautiful writer, he brought out a translation of the Four Gospels, which was printed in expensive style, each copy being sold at four francs (3s. 3d.). The book was issued in 1887, with the Pope's approbation; more than a hundred thousand copies being sold in the course of a few months. The Church had not foreseen such a wonderful success. It was alarming. The Pope's approbation was withdrawn, and although Henri Lasserre went to Rome and remained there a long time, soliciting a reversal of the decision, his book has never been permitted any more.

Another attempt of the same sort took place in 1894: such is the Divine attraction which the Scriptures exert over successive generations. A translation of the whole Bible, from the originals (with the Apocrypha and Notes), by Abbé Crampon, was published; it reached rapidly a very large circulation. The translation is correct, and the Notes are surprisingly moderate. This version is still allowed by the ecclesiastical authorities.

The policy of Rome with regard to the Scriptures has ever been equivocal. To forbid them absolutely would be scandalous, especially in the opinion of British and American Catholics, which has to be taken account of. On the other hand, to favour their being read by the laity indiscriminately, would be dangerous. Rome takes a middle course. She allows what she cannot prevent. It may be that, in proportion as modern Protestantism is under-valuing the Bible, under the influence of Higher Criticism, Rome's tactics will be more and more to pose as the defender of the Book. But in her heart of hearts there is nothing Rome fears so much as true Evangelical Christianity, as represented by the simple colporteur with a Bible in his hand.

The Revival, coming at a time of liberalism and progress, such as, on the whole, was the reign of Louis-Philippe (identical with the first part of what English people call the Victorian era), was, indeed, a great blessing to France. It was the time when Paris, which at the beginning of the century had only two Protestant places of worship, had now twenty or more, in which some of the best and most Evangelical preachers that France ever possessed could be heard (though there were also Rationalist ones).

Adolphe Monod was a star of the first magnitude; a man of such eloquence that, two hours before the time appointed for his preaching, a queue was formed at the gates of the Oratoire. He had

been converted, while in the ministry, at Naples ; had been deposed from his office as pastor of the Lyons Church on account of his orthodoxy : this was the occasion of the foundation of a large and flourishing Free Church in that city. Later on, Adolphe Monod had been called to the largest Protestant Church of Paris. He died in 1856, after a long and painful illness, during which he preached every Sunday morning from his death-bed to his family and a few private friends. Those sermons, *Les Adieux d'Adolphe Monod*, were published after his death, and are full of the marrow of Scripture.

Comte Agénor de Gasparin, a member of the House of Deputies, was a staunch Evangelical and an eloquent Christian lecturer.

Napoléon Roussel and Philippe Boucher stood in the front rank as evangelists, as a little later did Léon Pilatte. Roussel was, besides, an unrivalled pamphlet writer, and Pilatte a clever debater and journalist.

The man, however, who exerted perhaps the greatest influence on the French Protestant Churches—an influence which extended far beyond and reached the intellectual world of that time—was one who was born, lived and died in Switzerland : Alexandre Vinet.

Alexandre Vinet was the luminous and genial advocate of Christian individualism. With inexorable logic and wonderful felicity of expression, he showed, in numerous books, sermons and

magazine articles, that the soul of the Gospel, and therefore of true Reformed doctrine, was personal responsibility to God, implying freedom with regard to tradition and national custom in matters of religion. Vinet's influence was immense. He came at the proper time, and did a work which was most necessary. He brought back French Protestantism, at least in a large measure, to the principles of spontaneity, liberty and spirituality which had reigned at the beginning of the Reformation. Vinet reached an *élite* through the periodical *le Semeur*, and through his books, which are still being read and republished. A devout Evangelical, though broader on some points than some of his strict orthodox friends, Vinet's religion was based more on the internal evidence than on external authority, and in that respect, too, he was a forerunner. Sainte-Beuve, the great French critic and the celebrated author of *Port-Royal*, was for a time, while living at Lausanne, under the spell of Vinet, for whom he professed a great admiration.

The beginning of Louis-Philippe's reign had been full of promise ; but gradually the conservative spirit asserted itself. Evangelical propaganda was made more and more difficult ; in some cases the evangelists were fined and even imprisoned.

It should not be supposed that the Revival and its doctrines had won their way in such a manner as to annihilate Rationalism. While Adolphe and Frédéric Monod, Grandpierre and others in

the Reformed Church, Louis Meyer in the Lutheran Church, were holding up the true standards of faith, men like Athanase Coquerel, Martin-Paschoud and others, were advocating the so-called "liberal" views; and it must be sorrowfully acknowledged that the majority of the French Protestants was on their side.

This was made evident when, in 1848, the Reformed Churches held their first Synod since persecution times. The Synod refused even to consider the question of a Confession of Faith, with the result that a number of leaders, foremost among whom were Frédéric Monod and de Gasparin, seceded from the old historic body to found an *Union of Free Churches* based on orthodox doctrine and Presbyterian policy. That Union completed the number of Churches which now exist in this country, each having its special gift, and therefore each having its special mission. The Union of Free Churches was never very large, but it has been, perhaps, at least at its beginning, more influential than any other Protestant body, as it was made up of an *élite* who had left the Established Church for weighty conscientious motives.

While French Protestantism was thus coming to life again—for the very conflicts between Evangelicals and liberals were a sign of vitality—there were, in the Roman Catholic Church, men of spirituality and great power; Father Lacordaire was preaching at Notre-Dame, with

wonderful success, a Gospel which, though carefully guarded of what might have given offence to his superiors, was largely free from Romish superstition, and had in it sufficient truth to create a new life in men's hearts. Father Gratry, an admirable soul, whose conversion to God from utter religious indifference had been deep and complete, was the chaplain of the great *Ecole Normale*, the highest school of France, from which so much genius has emerged from time to time. Both these men—and many others then, as since—worked and prayed in the sincere hope of reconciling their Church with modern aspirations; they lived long enough to find out that their hope was illusory. Lacordaire and Montalembert died before the meeting of the Vatican Council, but Gratry did not; and being under the necessity of submitting to the new dogma of the Infallibility of the Pope—against which he had powerfully written, or of leaving the Church—he submitted, though with a broken heart.¹

¹ There are few moral tragedies more pathetic than this. It is easy enough to blame men who, having seen the purer light, have not had the courage to follow it. But it should never be forgotten that the "Church" has been everything to them; most of them have arrived at the truth which they possess through some good man, or book, which came to them with the stamp of the Church. These men believe in the Church as being the body of Christ, the universal, miraculous society which is the embodiment of truth. The Protestant Churches are bewildering to them: which of them is the true one? It needs thought and prayer and prolonged Bible study to understand the nature of the true Church, and to free oneself from that worship of external unity which is the great drawback to spiritual progress.

CHAPTER XIV

THE SECOND EMPIRE, AND AFTER. ARMAND- DELILLE, M'ALL AND OTHER WORKERS. SOME LEADERS OF FRENCH THOUGHT

AFTER the shortlived effort to restore the Republic (1848-52) came that period known as the Second Empire (1852-70).

In the early part of Napoleon III.'s reign no evangelistic work could be carried on without molestation. No public meetings of any sort could be held. No political newspaper or magazine could be published without deposit of a large sum as a guarantee for the payment of the heavy fines to which the Press was subjected for the smallest offences against Government.¹

That reign, which was to end in a catastrophe, was marked by great financial prosperity, born of the new developments of commerce, of the building of railways and harbours and of the progress of industry and applied science. As a consequence, that period saw the rise of an inordinate love of

¹ A friend, now entered into rest, had in his possession a letter from the Préfet de Police of that time, thus worded: "Sir, in reply to your request to be allowed to hold meetings in your house for the purpose of reading the Bible, I have the honour to inform you that your request cannot be granted."

pleasure, a wonderful development of the theatrical mania, and especially of the low comedy, the music-hall, and the café, which became a luxurious and attractive place. It was the beginning of the publican's reign; then *absinthe* made its apparition—a liquor more deadly than all the others combined. Our forefathers had been renowned for the moderation of their habits; but now drinking to excess became far more common. To the shame of the Imperial régime, it must be said that, while it stifled every free voice, it did almost nothing to prevent the physical and mental intoxication of the French people.

It was a time when one could sing any lewd song which pleased him, but ran the risk of fine and imprisonment for whistling the “Marseillaise”; the time when Paris became—what it had not been before—the centre of cosmopolitan scandal.

The Government was supported by the Church, and supported the Church: a French garrison was maintaining the Pope's temporal power at Rome.

Two writers had a great influence over the French soul at that time. The first was Ernest Renan, a Breton who had been educated for the priesthood, but, on the threshold of the irrevocable vows had the moral courage to withdraw, and sharing no more the faith of the Church, lived and died outside her pale, though he ever spoke of her with a sort of sentimental respect. A master of French prose and a great Hebrew

scholar, he consecrated his long life, with studious and untiring energy, to the undermining of Christianity, not in the spirit of Voltaire, but, on the contrary, with mystical reverence, borrowed from his Celtic origin and his clerical training. His influence on the half-educated *bourgeoisie*, and on the intelligent working men, was immense, especially with his celebrated *Life of Jesus*. The Church of Rome fulminated against him; but she did not acknowledge that she was his great accomplice, by having withheld from the people that authentic life of Jesus—the Gospel—an acquaintance with which would have been the best antidote against Renan's subtle infidelity. One good result, however, of this attack, was that many were induced to read the New Testament and to interest themselves in the greatest question of life.

The other man whose writings did most to foster infidelity in France during the same period was an Englishman, Charles Darwin. Perhaps it may be said that Darwin's theory of Evolution has done more to undermine Christianity, whether in France or in any other country, than all the blasphemies of the eighteenth century. To many it appeared as if modern science had rendered the case of a supernatural religion hopeless. Even Christians were bewildered, and many tried to find some basis of agreement between the Bible and Darwinism. The reign of that theory (which Darwin himself does not seem to have

formulated with the imperious dogmatism that followed; nor did he intend that it should be made to imply the denial of God's direct action on His world) has been long and baneful; happily it is now on the wane, having been found experimentally wanting.

Charles Darwin was, to his last days, we believe, a subscriber to Christian missions.

Hippolyte Taine was a French philosopher of that age, whose philosophy proceeded from the spirit of Evolutionism. All the facts of life, to him, were explained by the laws of race and environment; the brain of man was the generator of thought, which was merely a product, as sugar turns into alcohol. But it is a remarkable fact that Taine, in his latter days, was wont to take his daughter to a Protestant church near his home, to have her instructed in the Catechism, he himself being present at the lessons; and he willed that his funeral should be conducted by the minister of that church, M. Roger Hollard.

As to Renan, he died in his unbelief. His grandson, Ernest Psichari (whose father, M. Jean Psichari, shared Renan's views), has just been killed in the War. This young man was a brilliant writer, full of promise. Brought up in the doctrines of his illustrious grandfather, he deliberately rejected them when he came of age, and became a convinced and devout Roman Catholic: such are the mysterious *revanches* which God sometimes takes, under our

very eyes, upon His adversaries. Ernest Psichari has written novels which are a sort of autobiography, Christian in tone and in spirit, though decidedly Romish.

Though the Imperial régime was adverse to Evangelical progress, yet the days of Renan were also those of such men as Edmond de Pressensé, the gifted preacher, lecturer and historian, whose father, Victor, converted from Romanism, had been a most devoted agent of the Bible Society's work in France. Edmond de Pressensé was the able and enthusiastic disciple and exponent of Vinet's theology, and of Free Church principles; but, above all, the representative of an enlightened, modern and yet orthodox, Christianity,¹ which he expounded to crowded congregations in the famous "Chapelle Taitbout." His younger colleague, Eugène Bersier, surpassed him, perhaps, in eloquence, but their gifts were so different that there could be no clashing. Some of the most influential people flocked round the Taitbout pulpit at that time.

In 1869 a little more liberty was allowed, public opinion becoming ominously impatient. It was then that the Rev. H. Grattan-Guinness came to Paris, and started some evangelistic services in Protestant places of worship,—a work in which he was mightily helped by a good and brilliantly

¹ His orthodoxy was, however, somewhat "broader" than that of the men of the Revival. But he held fast to the supernatural character of the Bible and of Christ.

gifted man, Pasteur Armand-Delille, who soon assumed the full responsibility of it, and also by some leading ministers, such as Pasteur Bersier. The principal meetings were held in the English Congregational Chapel, then situated in the Rue Royale, a few steps from the great church of la Madeleine. It was perhaps the first time since the Reformation that an effort was made to reach the man in the street. The Rue Royale meetings were greatly blessed. Every afternoon Pasteur Armand-Delille and his voluntary helpers—Paris pastors and preachers of all denominations—would give short addresses, pointing out the way of salvation to hearers of all sorts and conditions, who had been invited by a colporteur standing at the outside door with bills in his hands. Nothing could excel the skill and gift of adaptability exhibited by M. Armand-Delille as he viewed some newcomer, and at once framed his thoughts and his words to suit his or her mentality. The meeting might begin with half a dozen hearers, until the little chapel was nearly full of people who, for the most part, were strangers to the preacher, and to the truths he taught. The work went on during the war, and was continued until the Rue Royale building was taken down. Then M. Armand-Delille concentrated his activity on a Mission to the Bereaved, until he was compelled by failing strength to retire. A number of genuine converts were the result of the Rue Royale meetings, one of them being a young

Jewish writer—who is now, and has been for many years, an evangelist, pastor and journalist of great fidelity and ability, and has taken charge of the *Mission aux Affligés* (Mission to the Bereaved). His name is Pasteur M. Hirsch.

Then came the war, and, in the course of it, the downfall of the Empire.

All that could be done in besieged Paris to maintain the Gospel testimony was accomplished by a noble set of Evangelical men and women. Pastors de Pressensé and Bersier were foremost in their untiring labours, whether for the temporal or the spiritual relief of the people. To this great period of their lives these ministers of the Gospel owed the popularity they enjoyed, both being made afterwards Knights of the Légion d'Honneur by the Republican Government on account of their services during the siege. M. de Pressensé was elected a member of the National Assembly, and afterwards of the Senate, where he never lost an occasion of pleading in the loftiest terms, which won for him the respect of his colleagues of all parties, the cause of Christianity, also that of Liberty, two things which, in his heart, were one.¹

As soon as the war and the Commune were over—while there was a sort of revival among the Catholics, which took the shape of a solemn consecration of France to the Blessed Heart—a

¹ M. de Pressensé and other Protestant pastors issued a courageous protest against the execution, by the Commune, of the Archbishop of Paris, and a number of priests and hostages.

spirit of awakening came over the Evangelical Churches. A new society came into existence—*la Mission Intérieure*, and it is still at work, its centre being at Marseilles—for the purpose of making the Gospel known by voice and pen.

An English lady, Miss Blundell, whose knowledge of French was perfect, was employed by some members of the Society of Friends in editing illustrated Gospel magazines for the young and the old; a large shop was opened in the centre of Paris, at these Friends' expense, for the sale and distribution of the Scriptures, tracts and good literature.

A Dutch young lady, converted, we believe, in England, Mademoiselle de Broën, began a mission in Belleville, which had been the headquarters of the Commune.

About the same time (end of 1871) Professor Rosseeuw Saint-Hilaire, of the Collège de France, went to the large cities lecturing, with the moral authority which his title gave him, on "What France needs to-day." Professor Saint-Hilaire was an historian of no mean reputation, and, withal, one of the most simple-minded Christians we have ever known. We remember attending those lectures of his, given by municipal permission in one of the finest city buildings of Lyons, before crowded assemblies.¹

¹ Rosseeuw Saint-Hilaire had been a Roman Catholic, and was led to Christ, after a great trial, by the simple testimony of a Christian cobbler.

In the same city of Lyons (the reader will pardon these personal reminiscences) there came, in the summer of 1871, in company with Miss Blundell, a working man, Mr. Eck, who had been converted by the instrumentality of M. Armand-Delille, in Paris. He and his wife came to assist Miss Blundell in her mission of scattering good Christian literature. But Eck was more than an ordinary worker; he had a wonderful gift of oratory, which, though untutored—and perhaps for that very reason—was very arresting. But he had more than that: a spark of the Divine fire had lit up his soul. Through that man's preaching, a number of young people—twenty of them, perhaps—were led to decision for Christ, and among them the present writer. The winter of that year remains in our memory as a season of wonderful blessing, and as a demonstration of the fact that France is as responsive as any other country to the call of the Saviour, and to the action of the Holy Spirit.

The young Lyons converts began at once to work for Christ. A number of Sunday schools for boys and girls (called, in imitation of those in England, *Ragged* Sunday schools—and, indeed, they well deserved the name!) were founded by them in various parts of the city, and as many as six hundred scholars were soon gathered from the streets. We have mentioned this incident to show what resources there were, and there

are still, in the Protestant Churches of France, when visited by the Holy Spirit.¹

The effort which was destined to become the most popular and beneficial, was started by an English Nonconformist minister, R. W. M'All.

The history of the "M'All Mission," as it soon came to be called, has been often told; we shall only give a brief account of its origin.

In August 1871, just a few months after the defeat of the Commune, the Rev. R. W. M'All, then about fifty years of age, and his wife, were visiting Paris as tourists. They spent only four days in the French capital, and while going the usual round of sight-seeing, gave away religious tracts in French, which they had brought over with them from England. "The eager reception of those tracts," said Mr. M'All later, "first impressed us. At that period the populace, fresh from heart-rending disasters, seemed specially responsive to any manifestation of kind feeling. We would not leave the city until we had taken

¹ The following reminiscence will show what the spirit of the leaders of the new Republic was. In view of a Christmas fête to be given to their Sunday schools, one of the youthful Christian workers applied to the Mayor of Lyons for the free use of one of the municipal halls, which could hold two thousand people. The Mayor granted it at once. He was informed, however, by the applicants, that the fête would have a religious character; hymns would be sung, addresses given and prayers offered. To which the magistrate replied: "What is that to me? All citizens' benevolent associations have the same right. Let the Catholics apply, if they wish; I shall give them the same favourable reception." That mayor was M. Barodet, who, later on, became a Radical member of the Chamber of Deputies.

tracts into the heart of the artisan districts—Belleville. We contrived to meet the workmen as they returned homeward at night.”

“The tracts,” writes Mrs. M’All, “were given on the way and in the little shops on the Boulevard de la Villette and the large restaurant at the foot of the Rue de Belleville. I cannot forget the perfect behaviour of the young waiter, how he took me round to some of the tables, omitting others, conducting me back to Mr. M’All, whom I found the centre of an eager group outside.”

Mrs. M’All, a gentle, refined lady with a great gift for music, which proved later of such value, was as brave and devoted as her husband. Let us hear Mr. M’All again :

“One intelligent man, who could speak a little English, stood forward and asked if I were not a Christian minister. . . . ‘Sir, I have something to tell you,’ said he. ‘Throughout this whole district, containing tens of thousands of workmen, we cannot accept an *imposed* religion. But if any one would come to teach us religion of another kind, a religion of freedom and reality, many of us are ready for it.’ We heard them saying as we moved away : ‘Bons Anglais! Bons Anglais!’”¹

How strange are the ways by which God leads His servants! That a French workman *speaking*

¹ Robert Whittaker M’All, founder of the M’All Mission. *A Fragment by himself; A souvenir by his wife.* London : The Religious Tract Society, 1896, pp. 135–136.

English (a rare bird) should be on the spot just when Mr. and Mrs. M'All were giving away their last tracts, on the night before their return to England, and that he should speak as he did, was, indeed, a providential indication. It was the voice of a suffering people, it was the bleeding soul of France crying out, as the Macedonian in Paul's vision: "Come over and help us!" After a little time of hesitation and consultation, Mr. and Mrs. M'All, who had returned to their country, resolved to "come over."

Their first beginnings were of the humblest kind. A shop was hired in Belleville, furnished with a hundred chairs or so, some lamps, a cheap harmonium; an invitation was then issued, asking all the neighbours to come to "a free reading-room, where hymns will be sung and selected pieces be read. Some English friends will give you a hearty welcome."

From the first night (Jan. 17, 1872) the work grew wonderfully fast. In the course of a few years, twenty-five meeting-places (all of the primitive type) were in operation in Paris, and a large number in the larger provincial towns. The work goes on still, with somewhat modified methods, under a committee, now supported largely by American Christians as well as by English friends. Mr. M'All (later on, Dr. M'All) died in 1892, and Mrs. M'All a few years afterwards. Their works do follow them.

The success of the M'All Mission was due,

first of all, to the fact that it came at the propitious hour. The people had been made ready for the Gospel by the dire afflictions which they had endured. Another reason was the strong personality of the founder. M'All gave himself wholly, one would almost say passionately, to this work. His qualities as organizer and leader were of the highest. He knew the value of the personal element in such enterprises, and he made a point of giving to each of those poor men and women, who came from the first in large numbers to his meetings, the feeling that they were personally welcome. He would have a smile and a shake of the hand for every one of them as they passed out of the room.

Another cause of success was the absence of any "ecclesiasticism" about his meetings. Those shops had no appearance to be churches or chapels, and this was the real innovation. Simplicity, elasticity, constant good humour—those were the characteristics of the meetings. Gentlemen who came with a long and high-flown discourse on the unpretending platforms of the M'All meetings, found little favour either with the hearers or with the leader himself.

But the main reason of the success was, that it was the Gospel, and nothing else, the full Gospel, that Mr. M'All gave to the people. We do not remember listening to a single address by himself, or by one of the regular helpers, in which the way of salvation was not plainly in-

dicated. In this as in any other country, success will ever attend the faithful, warm-hearted presentation of the love of God as exhibited in the Cross of Calvary.

No one is able to say how far, and how much, the M'All Mission, and the other agencies which sprang up about the same time,¹ have reached the soul of France and influenced her. But this is sure: a large number of *individual* souls—thousands of them—have been brought to God; hundreds of homes have been transformed; a few Christian Churches have come into existence, and many have been quickened and spiritualized by the instrumentality of these enterprises.

The *Salvation Army* came later on the field; but it would deserve a long notice, for it has been the means of much blessing. Emphasizing the great doctrine of *personal* conversion, it has brought many souls to Christ, especially among our Southern Protestants. Some Christian workers and ministers of various denominations were the fruit of the Salvation Army's labours. And in France, as everywhere else, its social work is worthy of all praise.

A movement which had a great influence on French Protestantism and its evangelistic and missionary activities, was that which is known

¹ It was the privilege of the writer to found, in 1888, a Mission in Marseilles, Cannes, Nice and Corsica on lines similar to those of the M'All Mission, with which it was merged in 1883. The Marseilles and Nice branches are still in existence.

as the Oxford Revival in 1874-75, and which gave rise to the Keswick Convention. A large number of French and Swiss Christians attended the Oxford meetings, and returned with new fire in their hearts. Pasteur Théodore Monod, especially, was the instrument of much blessing in France at that time. His thorough, wonderful acquaintance with English, made him as welcome on British platforms as in French pulpits, and he had a masterly gift of adapting to French minds the exposition of the doctrines which had been emphasized at Oxford. The movement was a needed reaction against cold intellectualism and lifeless religious profession. It insisted on the possibility, the duty and the joy of being fully consecrated to God. The influence of that movement, which at that time was very great, is far from being spent. Had not German theology made such strides among the younger members of the Evangelical ministry, this revival might have wholly transformed our Churches, and made them what they must become, if they are destined to have a general, deep and lasting action upon the soul of France.

CHAPTER XV

BEFORE THE GREAT WAR

AS we come to the period in which the largest part of our lives has been spent, we find a difficulty in selecting, among the events of which we have all been witnesses, those of real import and meaning, which may indicate what, during that period, was the true soul of France. It needs the set-back of history to give to facts their relative value; and the danger, for contemporary writers, is, either that they unduly magnify some men and some happenings, or that they should fail to give them their due.

For a long time during those years, materialistic theories of life ruled the world of literature and of thought, manifesting their baneful effects on the people by an increase in the consumption of alcohol and by other social evils. The same tendencies were prevalent, more or less, in other civilized countries; Paris was not worse than London, New York or Berlin. Indeed, as the world grows old, there seems to develop an internationalism of evil, a sort of sameness and uniformity in the ways of living and sinning, in the passion for pleasure, in the worship of

Mammon and of the flesh. That internationalism has been powerless to prevent the dreadful War in which we are now engaged. There is only one form of internationalism that might have saved us from this catastrophe: the worship *in spirit and in truth* of the one Master, Jesus Christ. But the world has rejected Him, and is bound to suffer, till all the nations are prepared to acknowledge Him as their King otherwise than in mere formality.

However, the Spirit of God has not deserted this world yet, even though it has repeatedly and wilfully grieved Him. In France, the action of that Spirit has been evident on many occasions in the course of the last forty years, and it has revealed the presence in our moral constitution as a people of that Evangelical ferment which was deposited there at the beginning of our history, and has asserted itself, as we have seen, at various periods of our national life.

One of those occasions was the extraordinary agitation caused by the condemnation of Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish captain employed at the War Office, in 1894. We shall only allude to it, as the facts are so well known. France at that time, and for several years afterwards, was divided into two parties: those who believed that Dreyfus had been justly sentenced, and those who believed in his innocence. It may be affirmed that both parties acted in good faith, and were equally desirous of having the truth proclaimed,—except a

few men, unhappily influential ones, whose opinions were biased by political motives. Every one remembers the noble stand which, at much risk, Colonel Picquart, Senator Scheurer-Kestner, Bernard Lazare, Emile Zola and many others took on the side of justice; and how the whole country—with the few exceptions above alluded to—changed its mind when Dreyfus' innocence was made plain before the highest judges of the land.

The occasion was one of those which reveal the innermost spirit of a people. Subtle and powerful voices kept on repeating that the country would be morally weakened if it were made evident that a mistake had been made; that it was far better "that one man should die for the people, and that the nation perish not" (John xi. 50). But this Caiaphas language was rejected with abhorrence by the people. The life of that Jew, or rather his right to a fair trial, in short the moral question involved in the case, appeared of greater importance than even the apparent interests of the country. By a sort of intuition, which we have no hesitation to attribute to Divine intervention, the people saw that national salvation depended essentially on national righteousness.

Another event of great importance—perhaps the most significant of those which have taken place since the Revolution of 1789—has been the law of Separation of the Churches from the State. This was another manifestation of that idealist

and logical spirit which is peculiar to the French race. It was the natural and inevitable outcome of the Republican principles proclaimed over a century before, but which had never been fully carried out. It is to be noted that the French Republic was the first European State to take such a radical step. Its example was followed, a little later on, by the small, but progressive, canton of Geneva.

The Bill was passed in December 1905, soon after the "Dreyfus case" had come to its conclusion, and there was evidently a relation between these two events. The Church had made the great mistake of throwing her influence with the reactionary party—that which was most opposed to the revision of the Dreyfus trial. When the case came out in its true light, the Church came in for a great share of the indignation which fell upon those who had strenuously opposed justice. The stain is on her still; and the saddest result of this was, that the distrust of the people with regard to the Church became in many minds a dislike for religion itself.

But it should not be supposed that the Bill of Separation was passed by our Parliament in a spirit of irreligious fanaticism. The first article is thus worded :

"The Republic secures liberty of conscience, and guarantees the free exercise of cults, under the sole restrictions edicted below, in the interest of public order."

The restrictions are liberal and just ; there is no country in the world where the exercise of religious rights is freer than in France. And one of the great reasons which make the great bulk of Evangelical French Christians prefer a Republican form of government to any other, is, that the Republic is the only régime which has carried out in its legislation those principles of soul-liberty which, to us, are essentially connected with true religion.

As to the Romish Church, she certainly has no reason for complaining. Indeed, the Pope has now more authority on the French Catholics than he ever had before. He alone appoints the bishops, the Government having nothing to do with these appointments ; and the bishops, in their turn, appoint the parish priests. Practically, the Pope is the sole lessee of the thousands of sacred buildings which, though they are national or municipal property, are unconditionally and freely given to the Church for her services, and are to remain in her keeping for ever, even though, in any parish, the majority of the Roman Catholic population should desire a change in the forms of worship. This is entailing the future ; in fact, it binds yet unborn populations to the profession of the Romish faith, or deprives them, in case of change, of the use of those buildings which their forefathers erected many centuries ago, in a time when some of the doctrines and practices of the Church were very different from what they are to-day.

If some religious orders have been disbanded and their property taken over by the State, it is simply because they deliberately refused to submit their rules and by-laws to State registration, and to accept a perfectly legitimate amount of State control.

A consequence of the Separation, which certainly was unforeseen by legislators, has been a recrudescence of religious life and zeal among the *bonâ-fide* Catholics of France. In some parts of the country—specially round Paris—new churches have been built. The clergy do not recruit themselves so easily as before ; but it may be inferred from many facts that the younger priests are, at least many of them, actuated by high spiritual motives. While a large number of the population have dropped the support and assistance which they may have formerly given to the Church, and only hold to it by the christening of their children and the burial of their dead, others have been stirred up to greater liberality and zeal. The spiritual interests of the Church have certainly not suffered from the present situation.

In fact, there has never been a time, since the sixteenth century, in which the religious question was more agitated in this country, than in that which immediately preceded the War. The gross materialism which had asserted itself during the preceding period, and which is so adverse to the French mind, was replaced by a new burst of

idealism. Philosophers of great intellectual power, such as M. Bergson and M. Boutroux, led the students of our Universities on to the salubrious heights of spiritual reality, to conceptions of the universe and of man very different from those of Agnosticism or of mere Evolutionism.

Several conversions to Christianity were particularly striking. Ferdinand Brunetière, the leading critic of our time, and François Coppée, one of our most popular poets, both testified to having undergone a thorough change in their beliefs and in their lives, and died in full communion with the Church. And this is one of the most astounding facts of present-day experience. We are constantly told that unless our Christianity gets rid of the supernatural, or, at least, of those parts of the supernatural which are most objected to by modern science: the Inspiration of the Bible, the Virgin Birth and the physical Resurrection of Christ being amongst the things we are thus required to abandon; we are told, I say, that unless these "myths" are left out of our creed, there is no hope of seeing our generation turn to God. And here we are confronted with a movement which leads some of our most intellectual men, such as those named above—to whose names many more might be added—not only to religious belief in the abstract, but to distinct, positive acceptance of those beliefs which science would find it hardest to swallow, including the Infallibility of a man—the Pope, the genuine-

ness of the miracles ascribed to the saints or the saints' relics and the apparitions of the Virgin at Lourdes! If it has been possible for former unbelievers like Brunetière to accept the supernatural which the Church imposes on her members, and to do so without committing intellectual suicide, why should we, Evangelicals, be afraid to stand by the Biblical supernatural, which is essential to the very existence of Christianity?¹

It was our privilege to have some personal acquaintance with a man who, during the course of the few years which preceded the War, had begun to make his mark in the literary world, and was fast becoming one of the spiritual leaders of the young generation. His name was Charles Péguy. Born of peasant stock, he had been brought up by a good, simple-hearted Catholic mother, but in the course of his studies at the Ecole Normale had become a free-thinker. When the Dreyfus struggle began, he threw himself

¹ This is the testimony of François Coppée : "During weeks and months spent in bed and in my room, I have lived with the Gospel, and little by little each line of the Holy Book has become living for me, and has affirmed its truth. Yes, in every word of the Gospel I have seen truth shine like a star. I have felt its throbs in my heart. How could I henceforth refuse to believe in miracles and mysteries, when such a deep and mysterious transformation has just been wrought in me? For my soul was blind to the light of faith, and now it sees it in all its splendour; it was deaf to God's Word, and now it hears it in its persuasive suavity; it was paralysed by indifference, and now it takes its flight to heaven; and the impure demons which troubled and possessed it, have been for ever cast out!"

heart and soul into it, and the pamphlets he wrote at that time began his reputation. He was on the Dreyfus side, naturally. But when the battle had been won, Péguy was soon disgusted with the way in which some of his former associates took advantage of that victory for themselves or for their political ends. Péguy was one of those men who seldom agree with the majority ; he was born to be one of those noble "fools" who are given to the world from time to time to make it ashamed of its selfishness.

It was then that Péguy returned to his mother's faith. Not blindly, however ; he was too conscientious for that. Somehow, he was satisfied that the Church's creed could be accepted by an intellectual, well-informed mind. He had a special devotion for that great figure which we have tried to sketch, Jeanne d'Arc, and much of his latter work was devoted to the glory of the heroine, in whom he saw the symbolical representation of France herself. It would be difficult to translate Péguy's writings ; even in French the beauty of his style does not appear at first, and is, to an ordinary reader, marred by incessant and (apparently though not truly) idle repetitions. Some of his pages would strike any Christian reader by the intense love for Christ, and the understanding of God's heart, which they reveal.

After reading one of his books, we felt moved to go and interview him in a friendly spirit.

Finding him in the small office which was so easily opened to any visitor, we asked him if what he wrote was merely inspired by the perception of the literary beauty of the Gospel, or whether he really believed in it as historical and God-given. Looking us in the face, he replied at once: "I believe the Gospel as a true Christian does. I have returned to God through the way which naturally opened to me. I had been brought up in the Catholic faith; I came to God by that way. Had I been born a Protestant, I should probably have come your way. I have many friends among the Protestants, and I feel we are one in that which really matters." There was no time, and this was not the occasion, to discuss matters more thoroughly; but we went away from that visit with the deep impression that this was, indeed, a true Nathanael, a sincere lover of Christ, whom God might use for great things in our country.

Charles Péguy was a lieutenant of the Reserve; he was killed in the battle of the Marne. But others have caught his spirit. God grant that, from among them, there may arise the men who will be the leaders of the new France, as she emerges, victorious and purified, from her present baptism of blood!

Charles Péguy might have been described as an orthodox Modernist. Modernism, in its various forms, has appeared in other countries besides France; in Italy, Murri, Fogazzaro; in

England, Father Tyrrell and many others, have been trying to bring the Church and the people together, to adapt the Church to the needs and aspirations of our age. France has perhaps contributed to this effort more largely than any other nation. And here, as everywhere else, the generous attempt has proved—will ever prove—illusory and completely unsuccessful.

The Modernist starts with an idea which in itself is already heretical. He believes that any outside advice, counsel or entreaty may legitimately be offered to, and have a beneficial effect on, the Supreme Authority which rules the Church. The real fact is, that the Pope, if he is infallible, must receive his counsels from God direct, and only from Him, and has nothing to receive from men except their allegiance and their blind obedience. To think that a man—lay or clerical—may have more light than the Pope on any subject is, implicitly, to be a Protestant. Every effort to “modernize” the Church, therefore, is doomed to failure. Even though the Church may, in the course of time, skilfully concede some points, she will never pardon those who have presumed to see farther ahead than herself.

Some Modernists have tried to introduce in orthodox theology the methods and conclusions of the Critical School: thus, M. Loisy. No wonder that he has met with the Pope’s *non possumus*, and finally, having to choose between Rationalism

and Religion, has given up the Christian faith altogether.

But there have been other forms of Modernism which appeal much more to our sympathies. These have been attempts to introduce a democratic and Evangelical spirit into the Church's methods, without in the least touching on her theological tenets. But even this is heresy; for the Pope must be looked upon by true Catholics as infallible in matters of policy as well as in matters of doctrine; whenever it is necessary that he should be led by the Holy Spirit, he cannot fail to be Divinely inspired. No initiative, in any matter which concerns the well-being of the Church, can come from the rank and file of the faithful. Here is a case which will illustrate this assertion:

M. Marc Sangnier, a wealthy layman, founded, some twenty years ago, a Catholic Young Men's Society, called *Le Sillon* (The Furrow). His purpose was to reconcile the democracy with the Church. *Le Sillon* made a large use of the Press, and held many popular meetings. Sangnier himself, an eloquent speaker, wrote and spoke ceaselessly on Christian apologetics, and on social questions viewed from the Christian standpoint; and he did so with remarkable success. He gave a clear and uncompromising testimony to Jesus Christ, and, once at least, in a very large and unruly meeting, testified of his love for Him in a way that gladdened the hearts of some Christians who were in the audience. He threw

his energy, his means, his whole time, into this holy crusade, in which he enlisted a large number of young men of the educated class, professors of the University among them, their aim being to bring about a *Catholic* revival on *liberal* lines. A few bishops blessed *Le Sillon*, which went on for a few years increasing in efficiency, covering the whole country with a net-work of organizations. Then came an order from high quarters, intimating to the Sillonists that their immediate duty was to disband. No real explanation was given, and no real objection was offered. Such is the tremendous discipline of the Church of Rome: Marc Sangnier dismissed his Society, and nothing has been heard of it in the newspapers ever since.

It would be tedious to give the mere names of the priests and laymen who have made similar attempts. The story of their disappointments would be long and wearisome. But these men deserve our respect. Defeated, they have had God's approval, for it was His Spirit that moved them, though they have not had the courage—or the needed light—to follow that Spirit to the end. At all events they are a demonstration of the fact that God has not forsaken this world of ours; He is working in the hearts and minds of some, at least; and the holy unrest which is thus created is a far better sign than the stagnation of former days.

But it is sad to notice that, in every case, these worthy men have submitted to the papal condem-

nation, and have retracted. Very few among them have thought of leaving the Church of Rome to join another. To them she is THE Church, whatever their consciences may disapprove in her. Submission to the Pope, as God's Vicar on earth, is for them the supreme Christian virtue ; and all the more so if that submission be offered with the heart, without the mind, or even the conscience, being fully satisfied. This is a mistake, indeed, and a very grievous one. It sets a human authority in the place of the Word of God. It amounts to spiritual suicide. But that suicide is, in their estimation, the sacrifice of self ; and as such it deserves our respect, and even our admiration.

As to the Protestant Churches, the Separation from the State has been, on the whole, greatly beneficial to them. It has been a stimulant to liberality, and the people have well responded to the call. No parish of any importance has really suffered. All the institutions and missions have been maintained ; the financial question, before the War broke out, was coming to its happy solution. The War, of course, has created new and great difficulties, but even these have nothing fatal in them, at least for the present.

Before the Separation, the two sections of the Reformed Church—orthodox and liberal—although separated in some things, had still much in common. Their separation was then made more complete. The majority of the pastors are now on the Evangelical side.

But the Evangelical Churches themselves needed a Divine impulse, for orthodoxy is not life—though we hold that Doctrine and Life are in close relation one to another. That impulse has come, to a certain degree, from the Welsh Revival which took place in 1905, just at the time when the Bill of Separation was being discussed in our Chamber of Deputies.

We would not magnify unduly the influence which the Welsh Revival had on our Churches. That influence has been far from general, and it has not gone so deep as might have been desired. Other influences, too, have been at work, some beneficial, some adverse to spirituality. But the fact remains, that some of us have received an impulse at those wonderful meetings which made, as it were, the whole of Wales blaze in the sight of the world, in that year 1905. And through the men who brought some of that fire from Wales, evangelistic campaigns have been conducted, in places where no such thing had ever been witnessed ; conversions have taken place in many towns and villages ; Conventions of Christian people have been organized, both in France and Switzerland, at which hundreds and even thousands are attending year after year, each time receiving new light and new grace. We mention these things with some reticence, as we know the danger of spoiling a good work by speaking too much about it. Our hope, however, and even our confident expectation, is that God will revive the old Evan-

gelical Churches of France, some of which have already yielded much joy to their spiritual leaders by the way in which they have responded to the Divine call.

All this was before the War. But these Missions and Conventions, and the blessing attending them, are still going on. The War has given them a new *raison d'être*, and it is a great comfort to us, in the midst of so much sorrow, to see the work of the Lord prospering.

CHAPTER XVI

THE SOUL OF FRANCE DURING THE WAR

SINCE this War had to come, we must thank God that it came at a time of *moral* preparedness: when France was beginning to recover her soul, and when her intellectual leaders were in a healthier spiritual state than had been the case in the previous period.

Not that there was, apparently, much progress in public or private morality. France was then right in the midst of one of those fashionable scandals of which she has by no means a monopoly, but which she does not know how to hush down properly. As to the masses, the new movement had not yet reached them, at least to any appreciable degree. But there were signs of weariness among the people, a thirst for better things, which made us hopeful.

Then it was that the War broke out.

"From the beginning of the War, in every one of her actions," says Mr. Charles Sarolea, "in her reverses as in her successes, France has given the lie to her enemies. She has justified those who loved her and believed in her. She has disconcerted and amazed her critics. Those

critics in their surprise and in their eagerness to explain away their previous false judgments are speaking to-day of a 'New Spirit,' of a dramatic transformation of the French character. They tell us that the War has breathed a new soul into the people. But that explanation of the critics is as superficial as were their former blunders. What we are to-day observing in France is not something new, it is something very old and familiar."¹

This testimony is perfectly accurate, and the reason which has prompted us to write this book, so largely given up to the history of the French soul, was that we wanted to demonstrate to our English-speaking friends, in Europe and in America, the truth of the above statement. To understand the magnificent conduct of this nation in her present trial, one must go back to her very birth, at which God Himself was present, and one must follow her through the long ages, in the course of which God has never deserted her.

The necessary task we have thus tried to perform makes it impossible for us to treat of the War, viewed from the spiritual standpoint, so fully as the subject would require. In the last chapters of the present book we shall touch briefly on the main points of this immense and most thrilling subject.

¹ Charles Sarolea, *The French Renaissance*, p. 71 (in English and French).

In the first place, the War has vividly brought out *the idealistic temperament of our race*.

From the highest to the lowest, the whole people have understood, at once, the spiritual nature of this War. It has not needed much explanation to show to the most ignorant that we are fighting in the interests of international justice. All have responded to the call; the number of deserters has been wonderfully small. Some whose lives had been far from satisfactory have seen in this war an opportunity to redeem their characters, and the nobility of their souls has reappeared. There were, alas! too many men addicted to strong drink just before the War; but, during the memorable first week of August, drunken men were not to be found. It was our lot to travel through France, from north to south, during that week; we saw hundreds of trains loaded with men starting for the frontier. Among those hundreds of thousands we did not notice a single drunken one. There was no bragging, no loud singing. A sort of religiousness seemed to pervade the whole of France, and to float over those regiments, all brand-new equipped, which sternly moved towards the north-east . . . while the enemy was breaking through Belgium!

Here are a few lines from an author whom we have already quoted, M. Emile Faguet, Member of l'Académie Française. They appeared in one of the Paris papers, *Excelsior*, from which we

have culled them. Our translation will render but imperfectly the vivacity of the writer's inimitable style. But it will give an idea, at all events, of the spirit which has prevailed in the French Press since the War, and which still exists among all classes.

“‘MOI’ (SELF)

“I speak of one who has disappeared. The national war, the national peril, the national resistance, almost as their first effect, and soon as their full effect, have caused Self to disappear.

“How he used to occupy us, and to preoccupy us! And how we were pleased with him, at heart, though he sometimes tortured us, that big Self! Let us confess it: we scarcely thought of anything but him! . . . He had dominion over us, he was our tyrant.

“He was a worse tyrant for the very reason that we treated him as a good one, and thought that his tyranny was legitimate. . . . We would say to him: ‘You ask too much!’ And we smiled slyly at his exigencies. We would say to him inwardly: ‘You are enslaving me, but go on!’ He held us with silk cords; and that slavery, though oppressive, was pleasant as a caress. We were ready to do almost anything for that enchanting despot. . . .

“O war, O dangers, O murders, O sufferings, ye are awful and cursed; and yet you have this on your side, that you renovate our souls,

sweeping over them with a healthy and purifying breath. In every soul you kill the Self, and replace it by the All. . . .”¹

One of the most beautiful traits of this period of our national life, is the understanding which has been established between all political, religious and social parties under the name of “Union Sacrée.” One of the leaders of the Socialistic party, M. Gustave Hervé, formerly one of the most violent polemicists in the daily Press, has now adopted a new and surprisingly moderate tone. This is an extract from one of his articles :

“The great cataclysm has revealed to us that, in every country, there is something stronger than class competition, and that is, the solidarity of all classes. . . .

“Do you think that, when the storm is over, we should not be ridiculous (*grotesque*) if we came again to our International Congresses with the old saw of class competition? Why, the dead would rise out of their graves to remind us that, in the sublime hour of sacrifice, the *bourgeois* and the workmen of each country stood side by side, facing death, to defend the common fatherland.

¹ We quote these lines, knowing full well that Self is not going to be killed, even by this War. It requires more than that to do it. It required the death of Christ on the Cross ; and Self will continue to live in protean forms as long as men do not, by repentance and faith, nail it with their own hands to that Cross. But the above, nevertheless, shows that something is now at work in the hearts of men which was not there before.

“Socialism, when it shall emerge from the storm, shall certainly not deny the class problem, but instead of calling on the proletariat alone to build on earth the city of justice, it will appeal to all men of good will who love liberty, equality, and fraternity, without any class distinction.”

These generous words are all the more piquant for having appeared in a daily paper, much read by the working men, whose title was *La Guerre Sociale* (Social War), a title which has now been given up, the new one being *La Victoire*. If the above quotation represents the true spirit of the Socialists, it will certainly be easy for us to meet them.

Such quotations might be multiplied. That such should be the tone of the daily Press, is the token of a spiritual change, for which we should be devoutly thankful.

“The souls of to-day,” writes M. Gaston Deschamps, a distinguished *littérateur*, in *Le Temps*, “are hungering and thirsting after certitude. They are ready to respond to the mysterious genius who will know how to draw from deep and refreshing springs the spiritual comfort which we need.” But has not the “mysterious genius” appeared already? Why should we wait for another than the Christ, who speaks to us in the Gospels and from His Cross?

Here is another quotation. These words are taken from M. Paul Bourget, of the Académie

Française, writing in the *Echo de Paris*, one of the most widely - circulated papers of France. M. Bourget goes deeper still :

"I should fail in my duty if I did not emphasize the paramount importance which the religious problem is assuming among us at the present hour. France suffers ; and, as every suffering human creature, she wants God, because she wants to know that suffering has a meaning. . . ."

One of the most influential papers published in the provinces, *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, read by hundreds of thousands, had been known hitherto as the mouthpiece of Infidelity ; its tone, when treating of religion and morals, was often most outrageous.

But, in recent articles, *La Dépêche*¹ acknowledges that we need a sort of conversion.

"We have proclaimed the Rights of Man, but have not liberated ourselves from our worst tyrants. Those tyrants," the writer says, are "our prejudices." And he goes on, in the following article, to exalt the mentality of the American Puritans :

"New England," says he, "was founded by Puritans, men whose moral independence had been too vigorous to adapt itself (to the old world prejudices). Individual morality thus

¹ These articles have been quoted and analysed by Professor E. Doumergue in a religious journal, *Le Christianisme au xx^e Siècle* (May 18, 1916).

became so rigorous, so precise and constraining, that there was no need for the State to enforce morals. . . .

"It was on that solid Puritanic nucleus that the strata of successive races of emigrants were deposited. The American State, being the convergence of individual rights and ethics, was thus endowed with a morality. It was bound to the Right, and from the Right received its constraining power."

And the article concludes :

"In Anglo-Saxon countries, political doctrines were framed by men of theology, and were inspired by humanitarian principles."

Thus, this stout defender of Free Thought now recognizes that religious beliefs (what he calls theology) are at the basis of Anglo-Saxon, and specially of early American, politics ; that these beliefs have been the inspiration of the Declaration of Independence, from which has sprung the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and that we need a national conversion on similar lines.

Does all this signify that we are in the midst of a religious revival, or, at least, on the eve of one?

The facts do not yet warrant such a conclusion. That the religiousness of a large portion of the people, who hitherto had not shown much leaning on that side, has been stirred up, there is no doubt. That the believing Catholics and Protestants have become more fervent, more deeply attached to their several Churches, is more evident

still. That some of our national evils—such as alcoholism—are grappled with more earnestly than ever before, and that there is, on the whole, a moral progress, seems clear also.

On the other hand, a religious revival could hardly be expected where there is only a small and shallow knowledge of true religion. Most of the men who are now in the trenches have been brought up in utter ignorance of the Gospel, and a large number have, from infancy, imbibed a feeling of distrust towards “the Church” and her ministers. They are now living in abnormal conditions, away from home and its salutary restraints. They have a growing familiarity with danger, and with the awful scenes of death. All this somewhat hardens them against the calls of conscience. Nevertheless, the revival will come, we firmly believe it; but it will be, it can only be, by the faithful, wide and clear presentation of the claims of Christ. The soul of France is stirred; her heart is softened; the moral atmosphere is clearer than it has been for a long time. Whence shall come *the men*—God-inspired and God-strengthened—who shall be the prophets of these tragic times?

I should like to reproduce here parts of a most interesting letter, addressed to me by an officer who was, in his student days, while in Paris, converted from Roman Catholicism, or rather from Agnosticism; and who, before the War, was in the Colonial Civil Service:

"You ask me whether I think that this War will bring about a renaissance of religion. For each of us the field of observation being so limited, the answer to your question is difficult to give. An intense propaganda seems to be carried on by the Catholics—more, perhaps, by lay people than even by the clergy. But I do not believe this propaganda aims at purely religious ends; other aims are being pursued. Never have I so well understood as since the War the expression of *Catholicisme pratiquant* (active Catholicism) which M. Clémenceau is fond of using. . . . They are eager to persuade us that a Catholic, as such, is necessarily more patriotic than a non-Catholic. But the Pope's attitude of neutrality gives a rude shock to that pretension.

"Another very clumsy and dangerous method is being used: it has been repeated over and over again, that this War is a punishment from Heaven, by which France is atoning for her sins, that she may return to God. But it is easy to understand that 'the sins of France,' in the language of these people, are the very things which, in part, constitute her greatness: her democratic spirit showing itself in her representative institutions, liberty of conscience, development of popular instruction, etc. Of such sins, there is no need for us to repent.

"The propaganda thus carried on is often indiscreet and childish. Devout Romish souls are dominated by their faith in the *opus operatum*,

while in the Evangelical Churches the one thing which is, or should be, aimed at, is a change of the heart. Among the Catholics, a great result is believed to have been reached when some one consents to submit to a sacrament, or to wear 'a pious article' (*objet de piété*), such as a medal or a crucifix. That is considered as a conversion. And yet, such external acts have seldom a true religious value. . . .

" . . . This War is a hard trial. It stirs everything in us. Sacrifice is near at hand, and danger, and death. Some minds feel the need of clinging to something. Others, more saturated with Catholic teaching, are dominated by the terrors of sin, judgment, purgatory, hell. . . . Oh, if one could, at this moment, cause these poor frightened people to hear the voice that spoke to the prophet of old, Habakkuk: 'The just shall live by faith,' or if Paul could come and say to them: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God'!

" For many, God is a gigantic Colonel, armed with a formidable right to punish, and who must be pacified. . . . They go to the only door they know. Inevitably, they confound Christianity with one of its historical manifestations. They go to confession, they take the sacrament, and they derive a sort of quietude from these acts. . . . But as soon as the danger is past, their terrors vanish. . . . Will there remain anything of this feeling? And that which may remain of it, will

it have a religious value? Fear is not religious ; trust and love only are so. . . .

“ I question whether, when peace and quiet are restored, we shall not have to fear an explosion of materialism. . . .

“ In what I see around me, therefore, I fail to perceive the necessary elements of a religious renaissance, because it seems to me that there is nothing to prepare it. War alone, war by itself, with its butchery and its atrocities, cannot be a factor of morality. War is, without question, the worst of all evils.

“ After the War there will be an opportunity to resume the good fight for the Truth. We should aim at making the Gospel better known, and its fundamental principles better understood. French Protestantism, which is so active and so zealous, should not allow itself to be paralysed by the smallness of the number of its adherents. As to the Church of Rome, she should, according to the words of the Abbé de Tourville, ‘ resolve to make her own Protestantism.’ ”

I almost entirely agree with my correspondent, whose good opinion of French Protestantism, coming from one who was not originally one of us, is most comforting. But I think we should not wait till after the War “ to resume our good fight.” Now is the acceptable time. Everything depends, as my esteemed friend well says, on how the Gospel shall be presented to the people. The soil is being deeply furrowed ; but ploughing, by

itself, yields no harvest. There must be broadcast sowing. May God give us the right kind of sowers—those who will go in the true spirit, and with the living seed!

That the spirit of Christianity, which was at work so early and so persistently in our history, is not altogether absent from the soul of France, although the Gospel itself has come to be so little known by the vast majority of the people, is evident by the traits of devotion and disinterestedness which now abound, and which cannot be credited to mere natural nobility, for the stamp of Christliness is upon them. Take this as an instance:

A wounded soldier lay dying consequent upon loss of blood. There was in the same hospital a young Breton, far less severely wounded. Hearing the surgeon express the hope that the man might be saved by the operation known as transfusion of blood, if only some one could be found willing to give some of his blood to save the dying one, the Breton soldier said "Take mine!"

The doctor explained to him that the operation would be painful, and attended with risks for the two patients. But the fine fellow persisted, "Take my blood for the comrade!" said he.

The operation was performed successfully. In due time the two soldiers, side by side, began to recover apace. That they felt attached to each other—rescuer and rescued—needs not to be said.

A few days afterwards, the kind Red Cross ladies who had the care of the hospital, having made inquiries as to the Breton's family affairs, and having discovered that he was married, the father of several children, and a poor labourer in civil life, put their purses together, and one of them approached the good fellow's bed with five hundred francs in her hands :

"My dear boy, we all feel a great admiration for your devotion to your comrade, and we have decided to offer you a slight token of our regard. Will you take this?"

The Breton was greatly troubled. Five hundred francs was a goodly sum. Moreover, he did not want to hurt the feelings of those kind ladies. There was a struggle within him. Finally, he broke out :

"Madam, I thank you very much indeed. You make too much of a small matter, and I do not want to appear ungrateful. But I must tell you how I feel. I cannot accept that money. *I gave my blood. I did not sell it.*"

Such a lofty notion of sacrifice is not earth-born. It comes from God. Men who feel and act as this man did, are not far from the Kingdom of Heaven, though something more is required before they can enter it : they need to be brought face to face with Him who gave His blood for them, and who, long before the brave Breton soldier uttered those words of his, had said : "I lay down My life for the sheep. No one taketh it away

from Me, but I lay it down of Myself . . . and I give unto them eternal life."

The following dramatic incident will show how easy in some cases is the entrance of the Divine Word in hearts that had never known it. It is told in a letter written by a young soldier, member of one of our French Y.M.C.A.'s :

"I have been wounded in the following circumstances. My sergeant, my corporal, and myself had been ordered to dig a shaft and a gallery six mètres long, in order to blow up a German trench. Our work was almost finished when, coming up on the surface, I noticed that our trench was completely empty. All our comrades, on the enemy's approach, had been compelled to flee. I hastened to go down and advise my two friends of this flight. We decided to go on with our work until it was quite done.

"When we were about to finish, three formidable detonations told us that we were shut out from the rest of the world. The enemy had thrown three bombs into our shaft; our exit, therefore, was impossible; we were walled up in the gallery.

"We were reduced to two: the corporal had been killed by the fall of earth. We then decided, the sergeant and myself, to tie ourselves to one another with a bit of rope. . . .

"For myself, I had a strong impression that we should die where we were, and I felt a greater desire than ever to get nearer to my God. I

opened my New Testament, which I always carried in my pocket, and by the help of a small bit of candle, which I had kept, I began to read aloud some comforting passages.

“My comrade—surprised at first—finally came near me, and I went on reading aloud for ten minutes or so. He was powerfully interested, and we left reading reluctantly, being now without light.

“We had to remain thus over two hours. Then a formidable noise was heard, and by a chance which I call miraculous, I found myself lying on the surface.

“The enemy, blowing up our trench, had at the same time blown up our gallery. Though I felt some injury, caused by my fall, I pulled the rope to find my comrade. The poor fellow was yelling, his eyes had been burned. I quieted him the best I could, and though I was losing blood, on account of a wound made by a stone in my thigh, I groped with my comrade till, after a short while, we were taken up by a moving ambulance.

“Alas! my poor friend is blind. But I have learned that while they were operating on him, under the influence of chloroform he was talking about the Gospel, and kept on repeating: ‘God has loved us.’”

This young sergeant, hearing the Gospel for the first time in his life while buried alive with

the Christian soldier, was so impressed by this, his first contact with the living Christ, that, while between life and death, he kept on repeating the sweet words of Divine love! Is not this incident an indication of what the Gospel will be to thousands, and perhaps to millions, of our people, if only they have the opportunity to hear it?

CHAPTER XVII

THE WOMEN OF FRANCE

THE part played by woman in this War is immense; nowhere more so than in France. Indeed, a long chapter might be written on the rôle of the French woman in the history of her nation, on the part she has had in the formation and development of the national character, on what she is in the home and in daily life, and now in the tragedy of war.

Have you ever given more than a passing glance to that figure engraved by Roty on the silver coins of the Republic, and reproduced on our postage stamps? It is that of a woman, her hair undone and her garments floating about her, with a sack of corn held in front of her by her left hand, while her right hand is scattering the seed *against the wind!*

Whether the artist meant it or not, that figure is a fitting emblem, not only of the French Republic, but of the French woman.

Sowing against the wind! Hoping against hope! Ever at work, never discouraged. Preparing and saving the future, even while the present is in deadly peril.

The French woman is a wonderful being, whom our foreign friends have seldom understood. But she does not mind it much. Her husband and her sons love her, with a love full of reverence. She is inferior to none of them. She feels equal to all emergencies ; as long as *her men* will stand, she will. And, in many cases, *they* will stand because *she* will.

In the average French woman, heart and head keep an even balance. She has the feminine graces, and she has virile qualities. Her husband will agree that she is the better man of the two ; and he will say it, not in a flippant way, but because he feels it is true.

In the unending misery of the long, weary centuries, woman has often saved France. "Never forget, Frenchmen," says Michelet, "that your country was born of a woman, of her blood and her tears." But it is not merely of Jeanne d'Arc that we are thinking. We think of the host of obscure and sublime women, before and after her, up and down the generations and throughout the whole land ; of the peasant woman who, when her husband was taken away to the wars, tilled the fields in his stead ; and when the last horse or the last donkey had been stolen from her, managed (she is doing it now), with the help of her boy, yet too young to go fighting, to get a harvest from her land somehow. Plucky housewife ! When there was nothing left in the cupboard, not a crust, not a bit of meat, and no

money ; when her vegetable garden had been laid waste by the depredating hordes of marauders ; when—worse still—she had to flee from under her own roof and seek refuge with her young in the woods or the caves, she then discovered, by the genius born of necessity, eatables that had never been known. Some wild grasses that contained nourishment, some mushrooms ; and those frogs and snails, the mention of which provokes merriment among such as do not realize that these were the last and successful resource of some poor mother, when she did not know where to find food for her perishing family.

Far more than the pleasant aspect of the land, and the mildness of the climate, it was the character of the French woman, and the tenderness of the home-life in France, that won for our country that adjective, the oldest we find in history coupled with its name : *la douce France*. Chivalry was born in France. Woman reigned here when she was a slave everywhere else. If the degree of Christian civilization reached by a people is to be gauged by the amount of respect accorded by it to women, France was certainly, in those days, the most Christian of nations.

Changes there have been, not all for the better. But now, as before, the French wife and mother is worthy of the respect of her husband and of her sons, and she gets it. Woman's influence is greater here than anywhere else, and her moral character can be favourably compared with that

of her sisters in other lands. Her frivolity soon wears out, and gives place to those sterling virtues, shift and thrift, which she carries even to the point of their becoming faults. But how could we be hard on her? She has in her veins the blood of generations of women who have known untold hardships, and saving has become, in our womanhood, a kind of second nature.

Where the Christian faith has taken deepest root, though mixed with superstitions — in Brittany, for instance, or, in fact, in every part of rural France—the behaviour and dress of the women are extremely sober and austere. In the Huguenot districts, down in that South of France where one would expect, under such clear skies, much lightness of deportment and gaiety of manners, about the only colour that was to be seen in church a few years ago was black. Any woman who began to wear it, wore it to her last days. Widowhood lasted all life. A little “worldliness” has come in of late; but so little of it, indeed, that English or American women would be amazed at the severity of the Protestant women’s adjustment, and no doubt would not easily accept for themselves such Puritanic fashions.

In matters of religion, here as in all countries, women are conservative. There are many cities and villages where, before the War, the churches had been absolutely deserted by the men; boys, after their “first Communion,” would have thought

it a degradation to attend Mass or sermon. The same spirit reigned among Protestants, in some parishes at least. We have known some where not a single man would darken the door of the church. Strangely enough, those same men would not have wished their wives and daughters to share their religious indifference. It was the proper thing for the women folk to go to church, the men being content to wait outside or in the neighbouring cafés until, the service being over, they might take them back to the farm in their carts.

But for the women, religion—at all events the external manifestation of it—would have died out in some parts of France.

The War has wrought a change, not so marked as we should desire, but nevertheless a change for which we should be thankful.

During the first months of this tragic period, men returned in large numbers to the churches. Catholics and Protestants were alike under a deep impression. The movement, however, seems now to be on the wane. One may find several reasons for this; but we cannot help thinking that the main cause of this relapse is that in many cases the men did not find in the services that for which they were unconsciously craving. It requires a peculiar sort of preaching to touch and to win hearts that have been so long shut to Divine influences.

The Christian women, however, had done a greater work than appeared on the surface.

Their patient fidelity had not been in vain. They had taught their boys something of God and Christ, so far as they had been able. And we hear now and then of men dying, on the battlefield or in the hospital, who had seemed utterly careless of these themes, but who, with their last breath, have uttered the saving words which their mothers had taught them in childhood—not so many years ago, poor boys!

Though it is impossible here to treat the subject in all its fulness, we must at least allude to the practical capacities of women as exemplified in this War. In the absence of thousands of shopkeepers, the wives are carrying on business as usual. But for the pluck of these women the economic crisis, which is severe enough, would be far worse.

About five hundred Protestant ministers are in the Army¹—a few as chaplains, but by far the larger number in the rank and file. A number of ministers' wives, of several denominations and schools of thought, have courageously taken up their husbands' work, and are preaching on Sundays, teaching the Catechism, visiting the sick (which they did before) and even conducting funerals. The line is drawn, we believe, at the administration of the sacraments.

¹ There are about ten thousand priests under the colours. Beautiful and touching stories have been told of many of them. The behaviour of both ministers and priests is, generally speaking, worthy of all praise.

Red Cross, hospital and relief work is everywhere in the hands of the women. To speak worthily of this, would require a volume. God reward the noble women who wear themselves out in this blessed work! But what matches the beauty of such a letter as this—written by a mother to her son, who was leaving home for the Front? We translate it, carefully respecting the second person of the singular, which gives added sweetness to family intimacy :

“MY DEAREST CHILD,—I am almost dumb in thy presence, as I am afraid to break down while speaking, and thus to weaken thy courage, of which I am so proud!

“However, my heart is very full, and I would not let thee go without thy having at least an echo of all that vibrates in my heart for thee. . . .

“Go, my dear child, to duty and sacrifice. Thou shalt take away with thee my smile and my blessing.

“Be brave, submissive, patient, in spite of all trials: it is for our France! Be not spareful of thy strength on her behalf.

“But, in the measure of the possible, be prudent. Do not trifle with health and life; it is for us I ask this of thee.

“Be kind to thy comrades, devoted to thy chiefs, merciful to the disabled enemy: it is a humane duty.

“Remember God, to Whom I am going to pray so much on thy behalf! He alone is the righteous Judge; and His mercy is granted to whomsoever seeks Him honestly. If I knew thee to be in His full grace, with the faith and purity of thy first Communion, my heart would be less broken in saying *au revoir*, because that *au revoir* would, whatever may happen, remain as my cloudless hope.

“Keep this, my dear child, as the will of my motherly tenderness. Keep it near thy heart, and in the hour of solitude thou wilt find the kiss which I put here.

“Yes, at this solemn hour I bless thee from my deepest soul, and I ask thee, as I have asked God at thy birth, as I shall ever ask Him, that thou be faithful to the motto which has been mine from my youth up, through my whole life: *Patrie, Famille, Devoir* (Country, Family, Duty).

“Thy mother, who loves thee so much.”

That letter was written by a Roman Catholic; but it is wonderfully free from anything specifically Roman. And that is a fair sample of the sort of religion which is professed by thousands, by millions of our people.

Let us conclude with another woman's letter. This was written to us by a young widow, a peasant woman, living on a farm, away near the eastern frontier:

“Farm of . . .

“DEAR FRIENDS,—In this home, where we two, my sister and I, had married two brothers, we have had the sorrow to lose them both—one, on March 15, by a bullet in the forehead; the other, on June 10, by a shell. We have known hours of dark despair; only the love of God has appeased and comforted us. We mean to be valiant and strong to bring up in the right way our three little boys, the eldest of whom is six years old. That task, our beloved husbands have dictated to us in terms which are, for us, the greatest human comfort, and we shall not fail in it . . .

CATHERINE . . .”

God bless the two widows and the three little boys! God bless the womanhood and the boyhood of France!

CHAPTER XVIII

IN THE TRENCHES

IT has often happened that a great catastrophe has been heralded by some tragic event of lesser magnitude which had no relation with what was to follow, but seemed to be permitted by God as a premonition. Such has been the case with this War. The *Titanic* disaster had happened not long before the War broke out; and it had been a warning to the whole world, showing the vanity of human science, wisdom and wealth.

There has never been, to our knowledge, an event that has more impressed the French people than this. What peculiarly appealed to them was the wonderful ending: that crowd of people—mostly rich and worldly—singing, as the ship went down, the hymn which will ever be known as the “*Titanic* hymn”: “Nearer, my God, to Thee.”

The hymn had been translated into French, by the present writer, thirty years ago, and had only been sung in Protestant churches and mission halls. But after the *Titanic* disaster some enterprising publishers unearthed it, and it was printed and sold, by the hundreds of

thousands, at street corners, in Paris and in the provinces. For a short while there was not a more popular song than this :

“Plus près de Toi, mon Dieu, plus près de Toi !”

The “*Titanic* hymn” is now sung in many trenches. Here are one or two incidents connected with it :

In a letter written by a Christian sergeant, it is related how, in October 1915, his battalion received orders to storm a bridge which was held by the Germans. They obeyed; thirty-two men were killed, and the bridge was not yet taken. “At four in the morning,” he says, “my company was ordered to prepare for a *baïonnette* attack at six. The order was one which one never hears without a shudder, as one knows that a large number will be missing after the fight. The company was assembled in a trench about 250 mètres from the bridge. My lieutenant, an infidel, came to me at about half-past five and says : ‘Won’t you sing us the *Titanic*?’

“A few days before, when I had sung it, he had smiled. Was it the depression caused by this terrible night, the nearness of danger? Since then my lieutenant (now my captain) has never smiled at my religious talks. . . . As for the bridge, we have taken it without any loss; the enemy, finding the position unsafe, had left it at about five o’clock.”

The same friend writes :

“One of my most pleasant emotions in the course of the last ten months : I was returning on a very dark night to our first line of trenches ; I had to cross a thick wood, about a mile in length. It was sad, sad, and chilly. . . . All at once I hear a voice singing :

‘ Plus haut, plus haut, c’est le cri de ma foi ! ’

(first line of ‘ Nearer, my God, to Thee ! ’). I stopped ; it is useless to tell you how moved I was. The singer, I found out on the morrow, was one of our Salvation Army friends.”

Another man, unknown to the one we have just quoted, tells a very similar story :

“ We were in a trench, resting, when suddenly shells began to fall like hail a few yards from our shelter. The situation was a perilous one. . . . We looked at each other, and I was asking the Lord to protect us : a Parisian, an atheist with whom I had often talked for hours about the Gospel, singing to him ‘ Nearer, my God, to Thee,’ of which, though he was anti-religious, he had learned two verses with pleasure, said to me : ‘ P——, now is the time to sing the *Titanic* hymn which you have taught me. Start it, I shall do my part.’ And in a most impressive silence I sang with him that beautiful hymn.

“ I could scarcely sing ; I felt like crying. . . .

“ No one was hurt. Not one of our comrades tried to scoff. . . . ”

I have taken, almost at random, from an

inexhaustible supply, the following letters and incidents, which will speak for themselves. There is a great variety in them; but they all tend to show that French souls are not shut to the Divine voice, which is heard, in the midst of this tremendous storm, with all its tenderness—more, perhaps, than in times of peace.

Here is a letter from a young priest, addressed to his two sisters, who are nuns:

“God. Souls. France.”¹

“My dearest little Edith, my dearest little Alice, if this letter reaches you, it will be because the good God will have accepted the sacrifice which, for a long time, I have made of my life to Him.

“Indeed my prayer has ever been: ‘My God, fulfil in me Your holy will. If I may be enabled to live, faithful to Your grace, united with You notwithstanding all allurements, temptations and trials; if I may even become better and holier through those things, I lovingly accept to live, whatever may be the crosses I shall have to bear. But if, by giving way to my weakness, I were to become in advancing years less of a priest, understanding less the Cross, seeking myself and working for myself instead of working for souls, that is, for God—then take me to Yourself at once, so that, at least, You may get

¹ Priests and Religious usually put three names at the top of their letters: Jesus. Mary. Joseph. This young priest has chosen another trinity of names.

through my death that which I should have lacked courage to offer You through my life: a little good done to souls, a little love and glory for Yourself.'

"... Pray that my death may obtain from God what I ask of Him. . . . My God, I offer You my poor blood, that Your Kingdom may come, and Your will be done. Establish Your reign on all souls!"

Let us now read part of a letter from a Protestant chaplain at the Front :

"... What joys there are in the task! I return from our services moved, enthusiastic, breathing with open breast the hope of a magnificent future. . . . Our meetings are most impressive: real Revival meetings they are! The Gospel seems to have acquired a new savour; the heads bow of themselves under the voice of prayer, and our dear old hymns take a new meaning. I should like you to hear our heroes sing, 'I need Thee every Hour,' or, 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus' (translated into French). We cry and we sing, our voices mingle with our tears as we think of the absent ones. We live hours of intense and heavenly communion. When the service is over, we take the addresses of new men, and we distribute Gospels—we never have enough!

"We are at a moment of indescribable preparedness. A student said to me: 'I pray all

day long in the trenches!’ Another: ‘I had wandered away from God; but if I am spared. . . .’ Even the *apaches* (hooligans) say: ‘If we escape death, our way of living will be different!’ And, to wind up, mark the peculiar savour of these words, spoken by men who, in civil life, are common labourers: ‘This War will teach us to behave better with our women folk.’”

This, from a young fellow, twenty-three years old, to his mother:

“Oh dear *maman*, those bragging, worldly fellows who in time of peace seem to defy everything, ridiculing the Gospel and those who try to follow it—one should see them in battle! They are easily recognizable: the most cowardly of us all!”

The young fellow has been killed. The officer who wrote to his parents said: “Your son has fallen as a brave man; he was always faithful to his duty, and his example has been very beneficial to his comrades.”

Here is a letter from a non-commissioned artillery officer:

“DEAR MR. —, —Thanks for the leaflets. I am all right, and am afraid of nothing. The Lord is my Shepherd. . . . I am asking of you a small service—no, a big one: will you send me a New Testament? When I left Poitiers, I took with

me my old comrade, my Bible ; but it has gone through weather of all sorts—I am still using it. What comfort, what courage it has given me, and to my men also !

“One day we were in battery, I in the midst of my drivers and horses, behind a ruined farm. Iron fell on every side ; I was not without fear for all those young men ; they were saying to me : ‘Chief, we are not screwed here, we might get away. . . .!’ I replied : ‘Boys, here or elsewhere you are in the Master’s hands. I do not know whether you are Catholics or Protestants, or nothing at all ; but let him who feels small in the presence of Death come near me. I shall read to you from an old book, as old as the world, and it will make you comfortable.’

“I read, I talked, I prayed. I made a short speech in which I did not say all I wanted, but God prompted me. How they were changed ! Bright eyes, smiles, confidence, trust, joy. . . . God kept us safe. All kinds of missiles fell around us ; we did not move, and no one was hurt. Our little corner was the only one untouched. Our God, how strong He is, how great, how He helps ! . . . The same thing has happened often. . . .”

This striking letter, from a second lieutenant of the Reserve :

“VERY DEAR SIR,—Most likely these lines are the last I shall write to you. We have received

confirmation that our Division, with the help of reinforcements, will lead an attack on positions which have been defying us for the last two months and a half; to-morrow we shall be thrown on some German trenches on a crest in front of us, and which are protected by an unending net of wires. This means that a great number of those who will leave the trench will be lying dead on the bank to-morrow evening. . . . To-morrow will be the last day of many of us.

“As we were reading the fighting orders, a sense of consternation might be read on many faces. . . . For me, head of the first section of the leading company, I must be first to jump out of the trench, my men following me; I shall be the first target; I must not entertain illusions: to-morrow, probably, I shall have ceased to live.

“And yet, the first moments of nervousity being over, I never felt more calm and trustful. I know I shall go to my Saviour and my God. I have written: ‘ceased to live,’ no, I shall begin to live, or rather, I shall continue to live that spiritual life which God grants to His children here below.

“In the face of death, my sense of sin has become poignant. What realities these: death, judgment, eternity, sin! I never felt myself so wretched and despicable; never did I more realize the tragic reality of sin. If I did not possess the certitude of the pardon which is promised to those who have repented and be-

lieved, I should feel choked with remorse, and in awful anguish. And even now I discover new depths of sin in me ; faults which I thought to be light, or which I would not confess to myself, now reveal themselves to me. How many inconsistent actions of lightness and vanity, how much harm done and good neglected, how many evil thoughts ! I still cry to God, whose compassions are infinite, to forgive me ; and I jealously appropriate the promise : ‘The blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin.’

“I have just had a very earnest talk with my men. I did not hide from them that the hour was grave, that they were perhaps on the eve of crossing that passage which is called Death ; and, offering them the Gospel message, I exhorted them to get right with God. I tried to show them their fallen and sinful state ; the need of reconciliation to God, their Father and Judge ; and I told them of the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. ‘You are lost, I said to them, and your consciences testify to this. Believe on Jesus Christ crucified, and you shall be as white as snow, and eternal life will be yours.’ I quoted John iii. 16 to them, and I prayed with them ; they repeated the words after me : ‘We are sinners ; we repent, and we accept for ourselves the sacrifice of Thy Son Who died to redeem us, the salvation that comes through Him.’ I had urged them before to get right with God :

‘If to-morrow,’ said I, ‘you were to appear before Him, let not that be your first interview with Him; have one even to-night, to make the next one safe.’

“I spoke to them a long time. They seemed to understand. Many approved and thanked me. Oh, what a joy, if God should grant me the favour, of which I am unworthy, to meet above one of those souls, one which I may have brought to Him! . . .

“I must leave you. Good-bye, then, or rather, *au revoir*! Oh, what a sweet hope, to meet over there—we the redeemed of the Lord, for ever!

“With my best wishes for you all, and to you, my father in the Spirit, all my affection and gratitude.”

The reader will be glad to know that the assault was not given, as had been expected. The young officer has seen many dangers since, but he is still alive, and has been promoted. He is now a captain, and as faithful a witness of Christ as ever he was.

The Bible, to many of our soldiers, has become a Book of priceless value. Here are one or two examples :

“It is not only the guns’ and rifles’ report which I hear, but also the Divine words in my heart. These words are passages of my dear Bible on which my soul meditates. In the terribly painful moments I have to go through, God, by

means of the Bible, gives me strength; nay, more, joy. 'Joyful against all odds' (*quand même*) would be my motto. I have my dear Bible in my kit. It is now rather worn out: rain, especially, has spoiled it. But never mind; I have it, I shall not give it up. When I read, I seem to realize the presence of the friends who are praying far away."¹

Speaking of our dear Christian boys, Professor Allier adds: "They do not seek God in their hearts only. They have with them the Book of His compassions and of His promises. A great number of our soldiers have asked as Christmas presents copies of the Gospel, or some portions, to give away to their comrades."

A young pastor, who is a non-commissioned cavalry officer, writes:

"I have given away many Gospel portions and New Testaments; but I did not know what results there might have been. A few days ago one of our men, returning from furlough, said to me: 'Just as I was returning from home, about fifty mètres from the house, I found I had forgotten my little book. I returned quickly for it, and put it in my kit. I love to read it; for when I have the blues (literally, when I have the cockroach), reading that Book cures me.'"

¹ Quoted by Professor Raoul Allier, in his admirable lecture: *Avec nos fils sous la Mitraille*. Professor Allier's son has been killed in the war.

The pastor adds : "The man was something of a sluggard before ; now he does his service very well."

A chaplain writes :

"My friend, Gunner B——, has come to me radiant to-night. His first word was : 'I am happy ! I have seen a comrade of a neighbouring section reading a Gospel portion, Luke. As I told him that I possess the New Testament complete, he replied : "I have been reading this little book for some time, and as I am reading, I feel it does me good ; it enlightens me more and more."'

"B——, indeed, had noticed for some time the earnestness of this comrade of his. Not only did he abstain from light talk, but there were signs of reflection and conscientiousness.

"The man told B—— that, having been brought up a Catholic, he had given up all religion, having been shocked by the evil example of a bad 'shepherd' (meaning a priest). Now, he was specially interested in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. v. 39-44. These verses were those he read most. He was anxious to attend some Evangelical service."

This is written by a Christian lady, a relative of ours :

"I have just received a letter from a soldier at the Front whose name was unknown to me. But on reading the first lines, I remembered who it was.

“A workman had come to my house, over three years ago, to make some repairs. It is my habit to give a Gospel, or some tract, to unknown people who thus come to me to do work.

“That man had refused the Gospel I had offered him. He said he knew what it was, because his parents had attended the M'All meetings, and himself as a child had attended the M'All Sunday-school. But, he added, he would not hear any more of this ; he believed in nothing at all since his daughter's death, for 'if God were what He is said to be, He would not have taken away his child.'”

And now here is the letter, written by that man to the kind lady whose words he had coldly and stubbornly refused to hear :

“MADAM,—I shall let you know who I am in a few lines. I am one who, I am certain of it, has caused much pain to you ; for, having been sent to your home to do some repairs, you spoke to me about God, and I replied that I would not know about Him ; I had just lost my little girl, and I told you that if there was a God, as you said, He would not have deprived me of that little one, whom I loved as a father only can. . . .

“To-day, dear Madam, I come to beg your pardon for those words, as I have already begged God's, like the Prodigal Son ; and I think He has not refused me, but has forgiven me, for I

believe those words of Jesus Christ written in the Bible.

"We are now at rest, at the back, for a few days, coming from a part where lately it was pretty hot.

"As I was on watch-duty in a village where I had for my shelter a house which the poor people had been compelled to leave, I found there what I had asked for in my prayers, a Gospel of St. John—a little book like those I got, when a child, in the M'All meetings.

"I cannot tell you how happy I have been to read again those good words of the Lord!

"Therefore, now, if you forgive me, I shall be glad to receive the Gospel of Luke. I should be so happy to be able to read the New Testament! It will remind me of the time of my happiness, when I believed in the Kingdom of Heaven. . . . A repentant sinner.—Yours devotedly, A. O."

A few days afterwards, the man acknowledges the New Testament sent him, and he says: "I am thirsting to hear some one speak to me of God and our Lord, for here I am forlorn and lonely. . . ."

The brave fellow goes on to give an account of a wonderful deliverance, which, in his new-born faith, he has no hesitation to attribute to the Good Shepherd's care over him.

Of those who have died in a conscious, strong, joyful assurance of faith, the number is already

very large. We shall not give many details concerning them, as the list, most likely, is not closed yet, alas! and it is better to wait till the end in order to prepare, if God will, a record of them all, so far as that will be possible. Some of our best friends, some beloved ministers of the Gospel, have fallen nobly, and their dying testimony will ever be remembered. Dear Agulhon, dear de Richemond . . . and others . . . and others. . . .

Here is one, the last which has come to our knowledge.

“G. T——, aged 24, *Médaille Militaire* and *Croix de guerre* with palms (the highest military distinctions), grievously wounded near Verdun, died from his wounds, a few days afterwards, in an ambulance. That soldier has died a true Christian death. Here are his last words to a friend who visited him :

“‘Tell my parents I have made the sacrifice of my life. Jesus Christ is my Saviour. The will of God be accomplished in all things. I commit myself to His hands with full confidence ; I know the way that leads to life.’ He was, says the chaplain who writes this, a Sunday-school teacher and a member of the Y.M.C.A. of St. Jean-du-Gard (his native place). The commander of his battalion wrote to the head surgeon of the ambulance to ask for some details on the end of that ‘model soldier’ (those were his

words). And the same officer asked that, in his name, a wreath should be laid on the grave, with this inscription : 'To Private T. His commander and friend.' "

Such is the greatness, such is the power, of Christian living and Christian dying. Who knows but that this officer will, after the War, become a witness for Christ in the place of the young man so gloriously fallen ?

CHAPTER XIX

CONCLUSION

WE had purposed in this last chapter to draw conclusions from the past and present, and to try a forecast of what the near future will be.

But we confess that the task seems to be, at least, premature.

That we have faith in the destinies of our nation, and that we believe that a turning towards God will take place among us, has been seen clearly enough throughout these pages. How and when will these things be fulfilled, and what will be God's method to bring them to pass? All that, no one can foretell. We are quite sure that no spiritual movement will have real and permanent value which will not give the first place to the work of redemption accomplished on Calvary, to the written Word of God as the only source of redemptive truth, and to the Holy Spirit as the life-giving, life-propagating power. There will be no genuine religious revival which will not respect to the fullest extent the individual conscience.

We shall therefore conclude with this, the fervent expression of our hope and trust. And

we would embody our sentiments in a Prayer which has been burning in our hearts ever since the beginning of this War. We beg our Christian readers to join with us, if not in the words, at least in the spirit of it :

Almighty God, Creator of heaven and earth, "Who hast made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation, that they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He is not very far from each one of us,"—We humbly come to Thee in the name of Thy Son Jesus Christ, with our prayer and supplication on behalf of this, our country, which we love, and which Thou lovest also, the fair country of France.

The love we bear to her comes from Thee, O God, for Thou hast made us flesh of her flesh and bones of her bones. Such a love had Thine own Son, Jesus Christ, when He was on earth, for His temporal people. It cannot therefore be contrary to Thy holy will that, in a spirit of submission, we should, at this time of her greatest sorrow, trial and peril, pray for our own race.

Thou knowest all things, and that, in our hearts, we hate no one. We know that Thou, O Father, lovest all men. We crave Thy grace, which will enable us to love even our enemies. Forgive those, so numerous among them, who know not

what they do. As for the guilty, the criminal men, whose pride and covetousness have brought this scourge upon the world, bring them through suffering to humility, true repentance and death to self. We fight against them in the cause of Justice and Liberty, but we do not curse them. Give us victory over them, for our cause is Thine. Crush the powers of evil. Punish the cruel evil-doers.

O Lord, save France !

In great and manifold ways, Thou didst show Thy goodness to her in the past. Thou gavest to this race a pleasant land to dwell in, and Thou didst endow her with many natural qualities. Her very name speaks of openness of mind and of sincerity. At the very beginning of her history Thou didst send to her faithful men from afar, who gave a true testimony concerning Thyself and Thy Son. They scattered the precious seed of Eternal Life which they had brought with them, Thine own Gospel. That seed has never ceased to bring forth fruit to Thy glory in this land ; and it has even been carried, at various times, from this to other countries. And yet, O God, our fathers have often sinned, not only against Thy law, but against Thy grace. Yes, our fathers have sinned, and we, their children, have sinned also, grievously and repeatedly. Those of us who, by Thy grace, have been brought to believe in Thy free salvation, have sinned even more grievously than the others, because we had more light than they. We have yielded to Thee but a half-hearted

service. We have neglected Thy Word, and often allowed it to be despised in our midst. We have lost sight of the precious Blood by which alone men can be saved.

Notwithstanding all our shortcomings and the sins of our fathers, O Lord, for Jesu's sake, save France!

Remember the faith, the courage, and the sufferings of those thousands of our countrymen, true disciples of Jesus, who, in obscurity and ignorance, in patience and humility, toiled, wept, prayed and testified, generation after generation, ever hoping to see the country of their birth mightily blessed by a visitation of Thy Holy Spirit!

Remember the Martyrs, whose blood was so freely shed in the early ages of France's history, and at other times; remember, O Lord, their dying petitions on behalf of this land which they loved so wonderfully (and is so loved still by those who have been born in it) that death upon her soil was sweeter to them than life in exile!

For the sake of those witnesses, Thou Who hast promised to hear and answer the prayer of humble faith, O Lord, save France!

We know full well that there is only one people to which Thou hast promised immortality: the people which Thou art gathering out from all nations, tribes and tongues; a people of men who are born "not of blood, nor of the will of the

flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." And it is because we desire—with a desire which, we believe, cometh from Thee—that our nation should bring her full tribute of saints to the great crowd of heaven, that we earnestly pray for her temporal deliverance at this time. How could her beautiful language be worthily resounding with Thy praises in the great concert which is to be, unless millions of French voices had been trained to sing them? Many have already joined the celestial Choir; but there are not enough yet. We beseech Thee, O God, to give more redeemed souls to Thy Son, from this country of ours! Give time to Thy Spirit, that He may raise up new witnesses for this suffering generation! He is already at work, bringing forth some out of those bloody trenches where they have seen Death in the face, and also Thine own great Love in the face of Jesus Christ. Let many preachers of righteousness and salvation arise, as it were, from those ghastly tombs! Let there be a time of spring, of sweet heavenly breezes, after this murderous season!

See, O Lord, the courage and nobility of our soldiers. Though many of them know Thee not, and though their deeds, heroic as they are, cannot secure for them that eternal life which only comes through the death and resurrection of Thy Son, accepted by souls touched with repentance, yet their moral greatness marks them as Thine offspring. Spare their lives, save their souls. Give victory

to their valiant efforts. Were not the cause for which they are fighting and laying down their lives a righteous one, we should not dare thus to pray. But we believe, in our heart of hearts, that the cause of our Allies and our own is just. We again plead, O God, for victory, not for our own glory, but for Thine!

We pray for our generals and our statesmen. Direct their decisions; be Thou present in their councils. Let there be many among them who, realizing their own personal weakness, will cry out to Thee, perhaps for the first time in their lives. Reveal Thyself to them who are Thy ministers, to whom Thou hast entrusted the sword of justice. Show them that they, also, need Thy mercy. Grant that France and her Allies may be led by men of influence and authority who shall not be ashamed to confess Thy Name!

Thou hearest the sobs of the widows, the cries of the orphans; Thou seest the stricken fathers and mothers. Most merciful Father, help us, that we may speak to them in Thy Name; and do Thou open their hearts to Thy words of salvation and comfort. Grant that, while treading this thorny path with bleeding feet, thousands, yea, millions, may be drawn to the Cross of Thy dear Son, there to lay at once their sins and their sorrows. Where sin hath abounded, with all its deadly fruits, let Thy grace abound more exceedingly. Let the miracles of Thy Love outpass the

awful wonders of hell, which we are now witnessing.

Thou art not in the great and strong wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, though Thou hast allowed those things. Grant, O Lord, that we may soon hear the gentle sound of stillness, the Voice of Thy Love, which is the fulness of Thy revelation ! Come over this sinful, wretched and dying world !

And as this country, which has suffered so much in the past, is now suffering so much, O God, have pity on our motherland ! The world needs her testimony, when she shall have received the fulness of Thy light. For the sake of Christ our Lord, O God our Father, save France !

APPENDIX A



FROM *FRANCE OF TO-DAY*

BY M. BETHAM-EDWARDS

“THE department of the Gard offers an anomaly pleasing to English observers and progressists generally. Here and here alone throughout the length and breadth of France are found villages without a Catholic church, villages that have held fast to Protestantism and the right of private judgment from time immemorial. Nor is it among the meek and lowly that the more enlightened doctrine has chiefly prevailed.¹

“In higher places the Protestant element is overwhelming. Alike moral and material, spiritual and intellectual forces are here arrayed against intolerance and superstition. Were the same spectacle witnessed elsewhere, and the Gard no phenomenon on the French map, we might draw good augurs for the future. Half a dozen departments Protestant to the core, and

¹ The author should have qualified this statement. Many of the “meek and lowly” belong to our churches.

Boulangism were impossible, Lourdes a survival to blush at, the cloistered convent out of date as an *auto-da-fé*, France saved by the remnant. We must be thankful to find one such department out of the eighty-six. . . . One quarter of the entire population of the department is Protestant, none other showing a comparable muster. . . . It is my firm belief that there is a great future for Protestantism in France, were only some Wesley to arise, capable of leading the movement."

The Gard is not the only department with a large proportion of born Protestants, though none has so large a one. The departments of the Lozère and the Ardèche, north of the Gard, have mountainous districts almost wholly Protestant. The same is the case with the Drôme, on the left side of the Rhône; also with the Tarn, the Dordogne, the Ariège and the Basses-Pyrénées, in the south-west; and the Deux-Sèvres and the Charente, in the west.

In the eastern region, near the Swiss frontier, there are large Protestant communities in the departments of the Doubs, the Haute-Saône and Belfort, forming together what was in olden times the *Pays de Montbéliard*. In Alsace, of course, Protestants form a considerable part of the population.

APPENDIX B

HERE are a few "Thoughts" of Pascal, taken at random :

To make of a man a saint, it requires grace to do it ; and he who doubts it does not know what a saint is, or a man.

Man is not worthy of God, but he is not incapable of being made worthy of Him.

It is unworthy of God to join Himself to man in his misery ; but it is not unworthy of God to lift him out of his misery.

We know God only through Jesus Christ. Without such a Mediator, all communication with God is removed ; through Jesus Christ we know God. All who have pretended to know and to prove God apart from Jesus Christ had only impotent proofs. While, to prove Jesus Christ, we have the prophecies, which are proofs that are solid and palpable.

Not only do we know God only through Jesus

Christ, but through Him alone do we know ourselves. Life and death, also, we know only through Him. Apart from Him, we know not what is our life, nor our death, nor God, nor ourselves.

Thus, apart from the Scriptures, whose sole object is Christ, we know nothing, and see nothing but obscurity and confusion in the nature of God and in Nature itself.

Man is but a reed, the weakest in nature, but he is a thinking reed. There is no need that the whole universe should arm itself to crush him : a vapour, a drop of water, will suffice to kill him. But though the universe crush him, yet man remains nobler than that which kills him, for he knows that he dies ; but the advantage that the universe has over him, the universe knows it not.

All our dignity therefore consists in thought. It is on that we must depend, and not on space and duration, which we could not fill. Let us therefore strive to think well : that is the principle of true morality.

What a chimera is man ! What novelty, what monstrosity, what chaos, what object of contradiction, what prodigious being ! Judge of all things, silly worm of the ground ; depository of truth, cesspool of uncertainty and error ; glory and refuse of the universe.

Know ye therefore, O superb, what a paradox you are for your own self. Humble yourself, impotent Reason ! Hold your peace, silly nature ! Learn that man passes man infinitely, and hear from your Master your true condition, of which ye know nothing. Listen to God !

The *Thoughts* is not a book, but a collection of fragments, originally written on scraps of paper, some almost illegible. They have been patiently deciphered and put into some sort of order, by scores of patient scholars, in the course of the two past centuries. In the intention of Pascal, these were the mere material, not complete nor in its definitive form, which was to be used for his great work on Christian Evidences, based on the natural constitution of Man, the testimony of Scriptures and the person and work of Jesus Christ. The *Thoughts* may be compared to a large assemblage of quarried stones which have yet to be put each in its proper place ; but one is able to discern something, at least, of the beauty of the temple which those fragments were destined to constitute, when properly put together.

APPENDIX C

JEAN DE LABADIE, a Frenchman, born in 1610, was a priest, and a canon of the Cathedral of Amiens. He joined the Jesuits. Early impressed by the lack of reality in Church services, he started small gatherings of earnest believers, for the purpose of reading the Scriptures in French, of praying together, and even of celebrating the Lord's Supper in apostolic fashion.

Such unheard-of innovations could not be tolerated. Driven away from the Church, Labadie joined the Jansenists, but only for a time, and finally came over to the Reformed faith. Even then, that noble spirit, who probably was looked upon as mad by many good people of his time, was not wholly satisfied. The formalism of the professing Church was not in keeping with what he conceived to be the spirit of primitive Christianity. Compelled to leave France in 1659, he went to Geneva, and produced there such a powerful impression that the Consistory besought him to become one of the regular preachers of the Word. He began his ministry by vehement appeals to

repentance, urging a change of life on the multitudes that crowded the churches to hear him.

Among his hearers, for a whole year, was P. J. Spener, who was deeply impressed by Labadie. And Spener, as is well known, became the founder of the Pietist movement, out of which sprang the Moravian Revival, which, in its turn, was the means of John Wesley's entrance into the full light of the Gospel. Thus, by a true apostolical succession, the English Evangelical uprising of the eighteenth century originated in the earnest preaching and methods of Jean de Labadie.

The good man was not satisfied with his public ministrations: he held "private exercises" in his house, or in those of his friends. The police reported that Labadie "asked those who attended, to kneel down at the Lord's Prayer, and to stand up at the Creed." Think of that!

Labadie left Geneva in 1666 for Holland, where he adopted views very similar to those of the Baptists of our own time.

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